

LIBYA:

A GEOPOLITICAL STUDY

Dissertation

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By

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INTRODUCTION

In the last week of December, 1951, a new and disturbing factor was introduced into the already unsettled political situation in North Africa. Libya, one of the poorest and most backward countries in the world, the least likely candidate for independence along the whole of the North African coast, became a sovereign power under the name of the United Kingdom of Libya.

Libya is not even a 'geographical expression.' It consists of two widely separated coastal strips, Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, and a huge desert hinterland in which there are scattered oases.

Throughout its history, the area of Libya has only on rare occasions constituted a united political entity. Its history is rather the history of two distinct territories - Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. The historical individuality of these two territories can be traced back to the days of antiquity, when colonies representing two dissimilar cultures were established in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica by Phoenicia and Greece respectively. Roman rule and Arab conquest, Turkish domination and finally Italian occupation have never been able to change this duality of character. Down through long years of history, Libya, because of its geographical conditions, has never been able to develop a genuine unity and national state of her own. In the history of international relations since the end of World War II, the question of the disposition of the former Italian colonies in Africa in general and of Libya in particular has assumed a role which

far transcends the inherent importance of the subject.

The creation of the United Kingdom of Libya is the sole instance in which the General Assembly of the United Nations has acted as a supreme legislative authority.¹ Not only did Annex XI of the Italian peace treaty provide that the question be referred to the Assembly for a recommendation in the event of inability on the part of the Big Four to reach agreement, but it also stated that "the Four Powers agree to accept the recommendation and to take appropriate measures for giving effect to it."

The issues involved extend far beyond the frontiers of Libya itself. The issues, tensions and conflicts that characterize the turbulent state of world politics today have inevitably shaped the course of the negotiations. It is not surprising, therefore, that the problem has proved to be one of extraordinary complexity, characterized by strong external pressures and considerations.

The present study of Libya is of particular interest, both because of the unique role assigned to the General Assembly and because of that body's efforts to find a solution which recognizes political realities and strategic considerations and, at the same time, upholds the promises of the Charter concerning the paramount interest of the inhabitants of non-self-governing territories.

¹Article 10 of the U. N. Charter empowers the General Assembly to discuss and make recommendations on any questions or any matters within the scope of the Charter. The Assembly's recommendations under this article, however, have no obligatory character; thus the Assembly's authority with regard to the Italian colonies is in marked contrast to the normal practice.

The objectives of this study are fourfold:

1. To show the economic potential and the cultural status of Libya upon which her political future depends.
2. To discover the practicability and possibility of the Libyan experiment being employed and applied to problems of other colonies under the auspices of the United Nations.
3. To examine the effect of this United Nations' solution of the Libyan problem upon Arab French North Africa.
4. To disclose the effect of the Libyan problem on international policy in the Mediterranean Area and consequently the relations of the big powers to the new independent country.

Unfortunately field work could not be undertaken for many reasons. However, intensive library research has been carried on. Critical studies and analyses of geographical, historical, cultural, military and other conditions important in shaping the destiny of this area have been carefully examined. This study is by no means complete in all respects; however, it gives the reader a fairly clear idea of the nature, the development and, finally, the geographical, historical, political and strategic factors which have had an important bearing on the eventual solution of the Libyan problem.

PART I

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER I

LIBYA¹ IN HISTORY

Early Records

Our earliest knowledge of the Libyans and their land comes from Egyptian sources. From the time of the Early Empire, Egypt suffered from constant disturbances among her western neighbors, the

¹The word Libya is derived from the name of one of the early peoples of Cyrenaica. Information concerning the name and the people comes, not from any direct source, but rather from the testimony of other people (Egyptians, Hebrews, Greeks, Carthaginians) who knew them or came into contact with them.

In Egyptian documents of the end of the 3rd millenium B.C. and especially in those of the 2nd millenium, appears the name Rbw, Lbw, probably pronounced Lebu, which refers to an ethnic branch or group of tribes living in the border lands to the west of the Nile Valley. It was very probable that the term Lebu in its indigenous form was a plural (Ilibuen) or better a combination of At, Ait or Kel (At Lebu) or (Kel Lebu). This would appear to be the case when it is kept in mind that types of Berber names of peoples and places are found not only in large numbers in mediaeval and modern documents, but also in widely separated regions such as Cyrenaica and Morocco. The last would tend to indicate a remote origin. Through the Egyptians or Phoenicians the Jews learned the name which appears in Genesis (X,13) in the form Lehabim and in more recent biblical writings (Chronicles II, 12, 3; 16, 1; Daniel II, 43; etc.) in the forms Lubim or Lubim. The name Lwbyn = Libi corresponds to the term which appears in a neo-Carthaginian inscription found in Tripolitania, and to the singular masculine Liby and the feminine Lbt (pronounced Libi, Libet or Lubi, Lubet) found in Carthaginian inscriptions in Tunisia. It is probable that such names used by the Carthaginians had their origin in the geography of the ancient Phoenicians.

But it was the Greeks who introduced and spread in the Mediterranean world the old name of the Cyrenaican tribes. The Greeks adopted the expression Λιβύη to designate the region and Λιβύες for the people. They knew it for the first time either through the Egyptians or directly, and perhaps used it even before the beginning of the Doric colonization of the 7th century B.C. In Hellenizing the

Berber tribes of the oases and Cyrenaica. From the same source we learn that there were frequent wars between the Libyans and the negroes of the Sudan, their nearest neighbors to the south.¹

The second period of Egyptian power, the Middle Empire, was marked by an extension of the influence of Egypt over the Berber tribes.

The greatest period of Egyptian history, the Late Empire, brought Egypt again into touch and conflict with the desert Berbers, who became a serious menace to the safety of Egypt itself. Nevertheless, the Libyans continued to settle in the Delta in large numbers.² This Libyan community in Egypt grew in size until 945 B.C.,

name, the Greeks forgot its origin and formed myths and legends to explain it, such as that of a native woman called Libia, who gave her name to the region. The first mention of Libya is found in the Odyssey (IV,85), where it is described as rich in flocks. It seems possible to conclude that the term referred not only to the territory of the Lebu, but to a zone of North Africa comprising Cyrenaica and part or all of Tripolitania. Early, in the 6th century B.C., Ionic geographers mentioned by Herodotus (II,16) gave to the name Libia a much wider meaning; they used it to designate the whole then known or supposed African continent and this meaning recurs generally in Greek writers. In the Roman epoch other names were frequently used (such as Afri, Africa, etc.), although the name Libya is also found in Latin writings. There are remnants of it in the writings of Arabic geographers and historians, as well as other special designations which spread during the Moslem conquest. Even in Europe during the Middle Ages and the modern epoch, the name Libya appears with a variety of applications. Today the designation of Libya coincides more or less with that of Homer. Encyclopedia Italiana (Treccani).

¹ J. B. Bury, The Cambridge Ancient History, London, 1939, Vol. 1, pp. 166-168.

² Enciclopedia Italiana, Milano, 1934, Vol. 21, pp. 59-60.

when its strength became sufficient to produce the first king of the 22nd dynasty, Sheshouk, known in the biblical record as Shishak.

Greek Settlements

The northern shores of Africa are alluded to in the early Greek legends. The garden of the Hesperides and the waters of Lethe are supposed to have been in the vicinity of the modern city of Bengazi,¹ and the country of the Lotus-eaters, visited by Odysseus, is generally placed in the vicinity of Sfax in modern Tunis. There is also the curious story in Pindar in which the Argonauts on their return voyage passed into the eastern ocean, and apparently sailed around Africa to its southern point.² From there they transported their ships on a twelve-day journey overland till they came to Lake Tritonis, on the border of Tunis and Tripoli, from whence they reached the Mediterranean. According to Herodotus, they were driven into Lake Tritonis from the Mediterranean. All these stories indicate that the earliest inhabitants of Greece had certain vague relations with this region, but the first real historical event alluded to in Greek literature is the colonization of Cyrene, generally placed in the year 631 B.C.³

The colonists appear, first of all, to have occupied the

¹Harper Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities, New York, 1897, p. 810.

²George Rawlinson, The History of Herodotus, London, 1850, Vol. 3, pp. 153-155.

³Encyclopaedia Britannica, London, 1951, Vol. 6, pp. 937-938.

island of Platea, which is usually identified with the modern Seal Island in the Gulf of Bomba.¹ From there they passed to the mainland, and some years later they went farther west to the Spring of Apollo, where they founded the city of Cyrene on the plateau, nine miles from the sea. This was the center from which Greek influence extended along the shore of the country which is still called Cyrenaica.²

Cyrenaica was also known as Pentapolis from its five most important cities (Figure 1). Of these the first was of course Cyrene, the original capital of ancient Cyrenaica and one of the greatest of Greek colonies. It occupied a considerable area of land and possessed many fine buildings.

The port of Cyrene, called Apollonia, was also reckoned as one of the five cities.³ It was an important little town with a citadel, a theater and several temples. During the first centuries of the Christian era Apollonia was a bishopric, and even passed as the capital of the Pentapolis. It is the modern Mersa Susa.

Farther west lay the town of Barke⁴ (Brace), the modern Merj.

¹G. Rawlinson, op. cit., pp. 130-138.

²The name of Cyrenaica derives from the ancient Greek city of Cyrene, which was the principal center of that region in the period of Greek colonization. This name is applied to that part of North Africa which stretches to the west from the Libyan desert in the form of a peninsula limited on the west by the gulf of Great Syrte. Enciclopedia Italiana.

³Encyclopaedia Britannica, London, 1951, Vol. 6, pp. 935-936.

⁴In the Arab period the region had also the name of Barka from the ancient Greek city of Barca or Barce (Berea), rival of Cirene (Cyrene), which acquired considerable importance under the Arabs. Today this region is still sometimes called the Plateau or Peninsula of Barca. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 6.

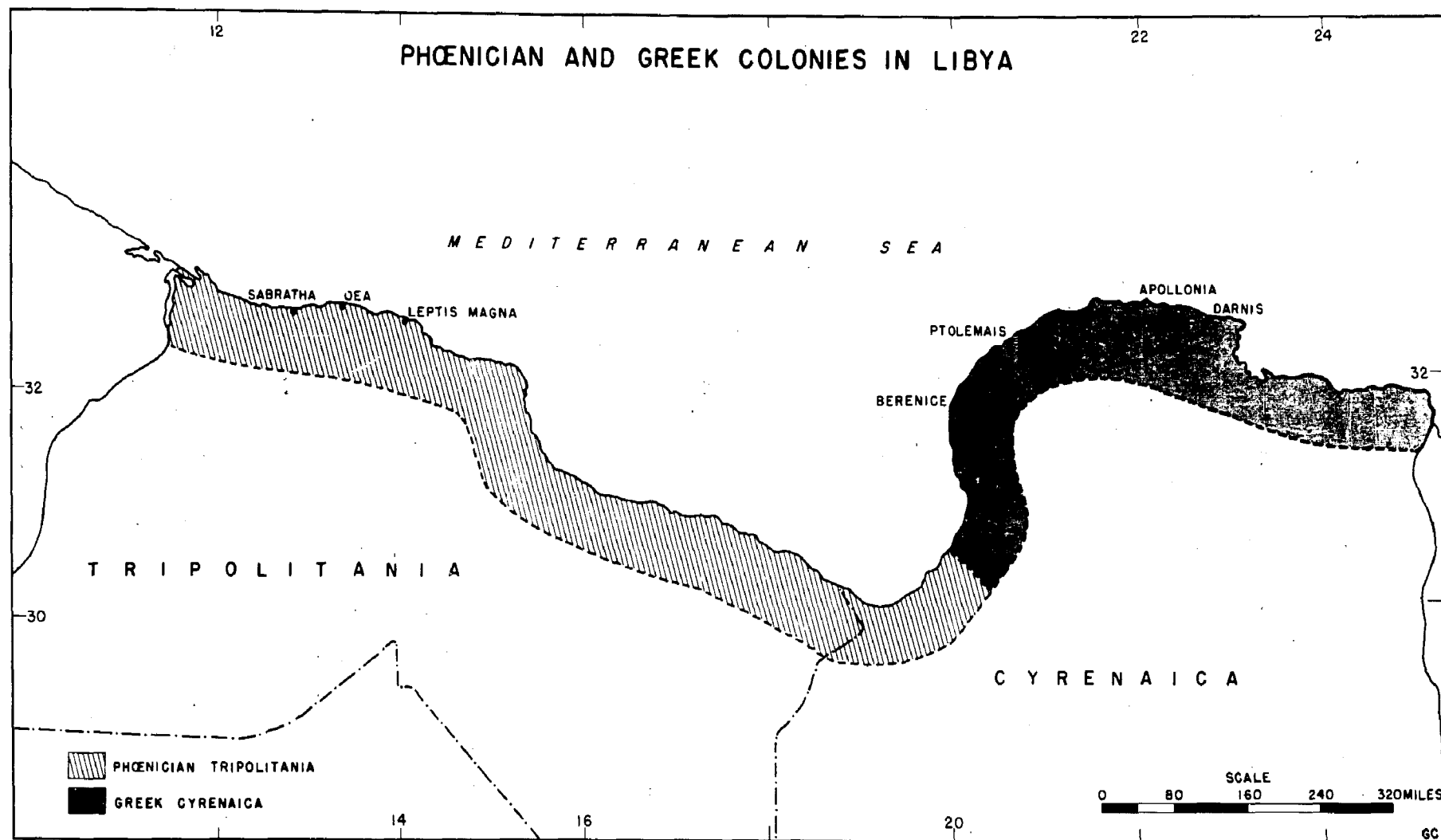


FIG. 1

It was founded about 560 B.C.¹ Still farther west along the coast was the town of Teuchira, one of the oldest Greek colonies in Cyrenaica. In the time of the Ptolemies it was known as Arsinoe (modern Tocra). The fifth town of the Pentapolis, Euesperides, was on the sea coast about twenty-two miles west of Teuchira. From the time of Ptolemy IV it was known as Berenike, but this the Arabs changed to Bengazi. During the Arab period it became the most important place in Cyrenaica, and has continued to be such to the present day.

At the end of the 6th century the Greek colonization of Cyrenaica was completed. At first the five cities were autonomous, often fighting against each other, but they ultimately settled their differences and formed a federation. In 331 B.C. Cyrene came under the power of Alexander the Great and soon the other cities followed. Later, conquered by Tolomeo of Lagos, Cyrenaica remained under Ptolemaic dominion until the time of the Romans.

Although the Greeks colonized and settled in Cyrenaica, they never succeeded in extending their influence much farther to the west or the south.² The various attempts which they made all failed in the face of opposition from native Libyans and the Carthaginians.

Tripolitania,³ to the west, had a history that was quite

¹ Ibid., pp. 935-936.

² Op. Cit., Vol. 3, pp. 666-668.

³ The name Tripolitania (or Tripolis) is a Greek word meaning three cities, which refers to the region of the three Phoenician cities of Sabratha, Oea, and Leptis Magna.

different from that of Cyrenaica. The Phoenicians were the first foreigners to establish relations with the native Libyans in Tripoli. They founded the first trade centers, Leptis and Sabratha, at the beginning of the first millenium B.C.¹ The Greeks tried to gain a foothold there, but they were driven out by the Carthaginians.

After the fall of the Phoenicians along the Levant Coast, one of their colonies, Carthage, took over their settlements in Tripoli. Carthage was a Phoenician colony, founded, about 800 B.C., in the vicinity of modern Tunis.² It was a commercial power rather than an agent for the expansion of colonization. Its territory was always restricted to a limited region in the north of Tunisia bounded by a line called the Fossae Punicae. Beyond this line it dominated the whole coast of North Africa from the Alars of the Philoeni to the Atlantic Ocean, together with the southern half of Spain, and at one time, Corsica, Sardinia and part of Sicily. Carthage always limited itself to the exaction of tribute, the control of trade and the acquisition of mercenaries.

The history of Tripoli is that of the Liby-Phoenician maritime towns called Ta Emporia, which were tributaries of the Carthaginian republic. The nature of the ties which bound them to Carthage is uncertain, as is also the character of their inhabitants, but they seem to have been sharply distinguished from the Libyans of the interior. Through them the Carthaginians controlled the whole trade

¹Enciclopedia Italiana, Milano, 1934, Vol. 34, pp. 379.

²Ibid., Vol. 7, pp. 680-683.

of the Sudan.¹ These cities which belonged to Tripoli proper were Sabratha, Oea and Leptis Magna. Sabratha was situated on the sea-coast and was known as Sahara in the Middle Ages though its harbor is still called Mersa Sabrata. The town is also known as Old Tripoli from the fact that Tripoli succeeded it as the chief administrative center. The next town to the east was Oea, the modern city of Tripoli. It may possibly have been a Pelasgian colony before it was seized by the Carthaginians. During the Middle Ages it used to be called Aias and was a great commercial port which commanded the routes to Lake Chad. The third city to the east was Leptis Magna, whose name has survived in the form of Lebda.

The Roman Period

Roman influence prevailed in Tripolitania during the Punic Wars in the second century B.C.² Direct Roman rule may be dated from the end of Carthaginian rule (149 B.C.). A century later the Romans extended their power over Cyrenaica also and for the next 400 years this territory was under Roman dominion. On the whole this was a period of peace and prosperity, although the Libyan nomads never ceased troubling the frontiers. The nomadic tribes appear to have been little influenced by Roman civilization, but the towns became to some extent Latinized. They adapted their municipal administration to the Roman model and gradually the people received

¹Encyclopaedia Britannica, London, 1951, Vol. 22, pp. 483-484.

²Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. 7, pp. 680-683.

the rights of Roman citizens. The Emperor Septimius Severus, who was himself a native of Leptis Magna, gave those rights to his native city and took a great interest in its welfare.

Colonies of veteran soldiers were also founded by many of the Roman emperors, and there grew up a system of Latifundia, or large estates with many small houses grouped around the house of the proprietor. Yet in spite of the gradual Latinization, the Phoenician language seems to have been the language in current use during the third century A.D. It lasted until the time of the Arab conquest.

Under the Roman rule this country was rich in small grain and olive oil.¹ It supplied one third of the grain imported into Rome, and also exported cattle and horses, wool and leather, and purple dye. There was as well a heavy trade in slaves.

The wealth of the country is shown by the numerous remains of houses, baths, theaters, and temples.

The subsequent history of the country is that of the decadence and destruction of a civilization. As the power of Rome decreased, the danger from the Berber tribes became more serious; however, it was not a Berber people who put an end to the Roman power in Africa. The Vandals crossed over to Africa from Gibraltar about 428 A.D., and spread rapidly along the coast, subduing the coast of Tripoli in 479 A.D.² The eastern Empire of Byzantium, which had succeeded the Roman Empire in Africa, was able to recover Tripoli

¹Enciclopedia Italiana, Milano, 1934, Vol. 34, p. 379.

²Ibid., p. 379.

between 469 and 471, but the Vandals immediately reoccupied it. The peace of 476 gave the Vandals full control of North Africa from the western borders of Cyrenaica to the Atlantic.

The Vandal kingdom was not destined to last. In 533 A.D. the Emperor Justinian occupied Carthage. The Vandals disappeared, and North Africa was made into one province with seven subdivisions, one of which was Tripoli.¹

The reconstituted Byzantine Empire lasted 113 years. It displayed considerable energy in extending its frontiers, but its system of administration was so bad that the people were driven to despair. Furthermore it made the great mistake of persecuting the Berber heretics. Five million inhabitants are said to have left Africa during the reign of Justinian. When the first wave of the Arab invasion reached Africa in 647 A.D., there remained little capacity for resistance, and in a very short time the last vestiges of the Roman civilization were largely swept away.

The Arab Invasion

In 641 A.D., ten years after the death of the Prophet Mohammed, the Caliph (Kalif) Omar ordered Amr ibn al Ass to conquer Egypt.² When he had completed the conquest of Egypt, Amr made an incursion into Cyrenaica, probably with the intention of reconnoitring the country and preparing for future expeditions toward

¹Encyclopaedia Britannica, op. cit., p. 484

²Encyclopaedia of Islam, Deyden, 1934, Vol. 4., p. 814.

the west. At that time the region was still nominally under Byzantine rule, but in reality it was in the hands of the native Berber population. The Arabs took over the region of Cyrenaica and entered Tripolitania, where they occupied the city of Tripoli as early as 643 A.D. They took Sabrata in the same year and also made incursions into the interior. These expeditions did not lead to a stable subjection of the territory. The real founder of the Arab rule in North Africa was Ukba ibn Nafi. He started his campaign by reconquering Barka and then extended the conquest of Ifrikya¹ until he finally succeeded in destroying the Byzantine rule in North Africa and in subjugating the rebellious native Berber tribes. He also founded the city of Qayrawan in Southern Tunisia which was to be the political as well as the military center of Arab Ifrikya.

After the Arab conquest, Cyrenaica and Tripoli became part of the Arab territory of North Africa (Ifrikya) and were merged into the Arab Empire, thus their history from then on is only a part of the general history of the Arab Empire.

Both Cyrenaica and Tripoli followed the Omayyad Caliphs of Damascus, and then the Abbasid Caliphs of Bagdad. They were ruled through governors who resided in al-Qayrawan in Tunisia.

When Harun al Rashid,² the fifth Caliph of the Abbasid dynasty, came to the throne, he appointed a governor from the famous family of Beni Al Aghlab to rule North Africa, and made this

¹ Arab name for North Africa.

² Amir Ali, History of the Saracens, pp. 347-351.

governorship hereditary, thus recognizing a kind of autonomous rule for North Africa.

In the tenth century,¹ when the Shia (sect) penetrated into North Africa, a Shia dynasty arose, and, with the aid of the native tribes, they took possession of the Aghlabid territories in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Tripoli. In 973 A.D. they conquered Egypt and established the new capital of Cairo, from which they ruled the whole of North Africa.

The second Arab invasion took place in the eleventh century, after the Fatimid power in Egypt and in North Africa weakened and the native Berber tribes overthrew their authority.

The fertile delta of Egypt had long attracted those tribes in Arabia, who wished to migrate to fresh pasture. Among these were Beni Hillal and Beni Sulaim, who had been settled in Egypt for some time. When the Fatimid found their presence troublesome, they drove them westward to invade Libya and Tunisia and to bring the rebel Berber tribes under subjection. These Beduin tribes, especially the Beni Sulaim, established themselves in considerable numbers in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, both in the interior and in the coastal cities. They speeded up the process of Arabization of the country at the expense of the Berbers. From the racial and cultural point of view, this second Arab invasion had far-reaching results in North Africa in general and in Libya in particular. These Arab invaders introduced for the first time numerically

¹Encyclopaedia of Islam, op. cit., p. 815.

important infusions of Arab blood into North Africa and succeeded at least culturally in converting almost the whole of Libya into an Arab land.

Period of Turkish Rule

With the decline of Arab and Moslem power, the Spaniards and Portuguese seized a number of towns on the coast, from Tangier to Tripoli.

The Turks, however, succeeded in restoring the power of Islam in the Mediterranean, and especially in North Africa through the brothers Barbarossa, who had been pirates from their youth. When the younger brother, Khair ed din Barbarossa came to power (1551),¹ most of North Africa was under Islamic influence, and the Ottoman sultan was induced to recognize him as viceroy of North Africa. The Turkish influence in these new territories was comparatively slight. Turkish governors were sent from the Sublime Porte; some, like Dorghut, made their authority felt also in the interior, and held under the power of Tripoli a large section of the western coast, as far as Gabes; others had little power, both in the city of Tripoli and outside.

Tripoli was the seat of the ojak² of the same name, one of the

¹Ibid., p. 815.

²A Corps of Janissaries or a Turkish military unit (hearth).

three ojak¹ of the Janissaries in Barbary. Their chief, sent from Constantinople, bore the title of Pasha. However, in Tripoli, as in Tunis and Algeria, owing to the remoteness and the decay of the central government, a domineering oligarchy was soon formed in the Janissaries' quarters. Rule was wielded by the Pasha, assisted by a diwan;² the administration was presided over by a Dey, the army by a Bey. Often Dey and Bey were the real masters of the city.

The internal struggles among the Turkish officials themselves and between them and the native tribes continued until 1711, when Ahmed Karamanli,³ the ruling Pasha, succeeded, by slaughtering his opponents, in establishing a dynasty. This dynasty ruled, with the consent of Constantinople, for over a century (1714- 1835). During this period Libya was practically independent, although it had to pay a sum of money each year to the Ottoman government.

Ahmed Karamanli, founder of the dynasty, was an energetic figure. In the thirty-four years of his rule, the country enjoyed comparative peace and economic prosperity; its power was felt more strongly than ever before, even in the interior of Tripolitania, as far as Fezzan and the territory of Barka (Cyrenaica).

¹(Turkish Yeni-Ceri) This name, given to the new troops of Turkish infantry, was created by the Ottoman Turks in the fourteenth century, and became their principal force.

²A Council.

³Encyclopaedia of Islam, op. cit., pp. 816-817.

The Ottoman government taking advantage of family feuds between the members of Karamanlis, the chaotic conditions in the regency, and above all the French occupation in Algeria, sent an expedition to Tripoli in 1835.¹ The Turkish forces landed on May 27 and reestablished direct Turkish rule in all of Tripolitania, including Cyrenaica. The second period of Ottoman rule (1835 - 1911) was characterized by the progressive conquest of the interior, hindered by the ambitions and revolts of the tribes. Nevertheless, during this period the Ottoman government took considerably more interest in the country and exercised a greater influence over it, than was evinced during the previous administration. It also brought back Cyrenaica, which for centuries had been completely detached from Tripolitania, under the political wing of Tripoli.

Cyrenaica and Tripolitania continued to be Ottoman vilayets till the Italian conquest in 1911.

Conclusion

Two conclusions can be drawn from this brief summary of the history of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. The major observation is that these two regions have lived in separation, due to geographical conditions, and accordingly have developed an economic, cultural and political life of their own, notwithstanding the fact that both regions were united by one political power at one time or another.

The Gulf of Sidra, where the Sahara sweeps down in desolation

¹Anthony Cothia, Libya Under the Second Ottoman Occupation, Tripoli, 1945, pp. 64-67.

to the sea, divides geographically two lands which have been culturally distinct throughout almost all of their recorded history, and have been only rarely and insecurely joined politically.

Under the Italian rule, these twin lands were more closely united than they had ever been before, yet they remained dissimilar in population and economic problems. The Gulf, which is now, broadly speaking, a frontier between nomads and settled agriculturalists, was at an early period of history the frontier between Greeks and Phoenicians. Both planted their outposts on this stretch of African coast, and to the differences between their civilizations and their methods may be traced the beginning of a distinction which long outlasted both Greek and Phoenician.

Cyrenaica was the only part of Africa which belonged to the Greek world. Mediterranean in soil and vegetation, it was also closer geographically to the Peloponnesus than to the habitable parts of Tripolitania across the Gulf of Sidra.

The Greek colonies and cities became rich and their wealth was measured by the agricultural exports rather than of commerce with the Saharan hinterland. They were situated on the most fertile soil of the plateau, a land of rich pasture, bountiful grain crop and fruitful orchards.

While Greek Cyrenaica was building up a wealth founded on agriculture and the export of agricultural products, Phoenician Tripolitania was following a very different path. The method of Greek colonization - to transplant a nucleus, who made the new land their home and a part of Greece - was strikingly similar to the

"demographic" colonization which Italy tried to establish in Libya. The Phoenicians, by contrast, were not colonizers, but the world's carriers; they founded, not colonies, but trading stations and merchandise depots. Such were the cities which sprang up on the coastal fringe of Tripolitania - the Tripolis of Sabratha, Leptis Magna and Oea. These dependencies of Carthage owed their prosperity, not to the development of the surrounding country, but to handling the commerce of the distant hinterland of the Sudan and other trans-Sahara lands. Phoenician rule extended along the barren coast as far as the Gulf of Sidra, protecting the eastern trade route. Leptis Magna was the only city of the Tripolis which possessed any appreciable background of local prosperity, provided by its olive groves. In spite of the development of agriculture, in the Roman era, the cities of Tripolitania continued to be trading centers.

Politically the regions of Libya seemed destined to lead a separate existence. The Pentapolis, when it lost its original independence, fell to the Egypt of the Ptolemies. United under the Romans, Cyrenaica became, at the break-up, part of the Byzantine Empire, while Tripolitania remained under the western emperors. Each of these two regions as a result of their different history, has developed an outlook of its own. While Tripolitania looks west, Cyrenaica looks in the opposite direction, toward the east. This difference in outlook is still discernible at the present time.

The second conclusion is that throughout their entire history neither Tripolitania nor Cyrenaica was able, either separately or jointly, to develop an independent state of their own.

CHAPTER II -

THE ITALIAN ACQUISITION OF LIBYA

Italy and Modern Imperialism

A thorough understanding of the Libyan question necessitates a background knowledge of the forces and policies that motivated Italy in her acquisition of Libya. Italy's actions, in turn, are understandable only when placed in proper relation to the larger problem of international relations and diplomacy in Europe and the Mediterranean area during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the present century.

Italy's attainment of the status of a big power came at a late date in her history. Centuries of disunity and foreign rule brought the young, independent kingdom tremendous economic and social problems. The most urgent tasks were to reorganize the country's finances, to promote industry and encourage trade, and to relieve the acute poverty that prevailed in general in the whole country and particularly in some of the more neglected regions.

Without credits to purchase machinery and raw materials abroad, with meager natural resources of her own, and with limited outlets for her few products, Italy's struggle was difficult. Nevertheless, having achieved nationhood, Italy bent all her efforts to the task of organizing what internal forces were at her disposal, so that she might catch up with some of the marvelous progress made

under the impetus of the industrial revolution in the other western nations. New industries sprang up almost overnight and her fast growing merchant marine began to ply more and more of the world's ocean lanes, carrying Italian products and the materials with which to make them. This was accompanied by the growth of nationalism, increased military power and political influence in world affairs. All these served to awaken in the Italian consciousness the need for colonial expansion.

Italy thought that her history, her culture, her social institutions, and the industriousness and frugality of her people would make her, once nationhood had been achieved, a natural aspirant to participation in world affairs. For this prosperity and growth were necessary, and the manner in which she chose to pursue these was largely reflected in her foreign policy and particularly in her quest for colonies.

By the close of the nineteenth century, the great powers of Europe had already acquired the bulk of their colonial empires and the struggle for and against the status quo was taking form. Italy was just emerging from her period of "national infancy" and, like all new nations, she had all she could do to attend to her internal affairs. Her political leaders were still cautiously feeling their way in the realm of foreign politics. Vulnerable to attack because of her geographic position and the weakness of her military organization, Italy's activities were necessarily determined to a large degree by her powerful neighbors. On the northeast, the Austro-Hungarian Empire still ruled a large and important part of

"Italia Irredenta," and sought in every way to prevent the growth of its young Italian neighbor. On the northwest, France, although still smarting from the wounds of Sedan, looked warily at the growing strength and the colonial aims of her Latin sister. Britain, on the other hand, not content with the lion's share of Mediterranean control, sought to cultivate (within a "safe limit") a sufficiently powerful Italy to hold in reserve against a possible French ascendancy in Mediterranean affairs. In other words, by the very nature of existing large-scale rivalries among Europe's great powers, the general attitude toward Italy was one of "tolerating" her as a nation, while at the same time seeing to it that she should not become powerful enough to take a decisive hand in European affairs.

Generally speaking, imperialism was not popular among the Italian people or politicians, nevertheless there were some Italian statesmen, foremost among them Francesco Crispi, who saw the need and appreciated the importance of colonies.¹ Crispi, however, could neither popularize his principles nor persuade the government to adopt a colonial policy. Thus, colonial schemes remained unpopular in Italy. Italian politicians were too conscious of the need of relieving distress at home to consider spending money on what they thought in their hearts to be simply a kind of romantic adventure. Crispi was far ahead of them in his colonial vision. Whereas, for instance, many Italian politicians were inclined to consider the colonial question

¹ Margot Hentze, Pre-Fascist Italy, London, 1939, p. 193.

from a moral point of view and inquire into the justification for assuming possession of the territory of weaker nations, Crispi¹ was willing to accept the standards of nineteenth-century politics at face value. Familiar with the policy that had "scrambled Africa," he understood the idea of protection by annexation and held a wider and clearer view on the delimitation of spheres of political interest. "Colonies are necessary in modern life," he said. "We cannot remain inert and do nothing so that other powers occupy by themselves all the unexplored parts of the world. In doing so we should be guilty of a great crime towards our country in that we should forever close roadways to our ships and markets to our products."²

Several weak efforts were made toward an active colonial policy, but these were not encouraged by solid popular approval nor did they receive the undivided support of the government. The failure of the government to solve any of the country's problems engendered distrust in the people. Instead of forming a stable and capable government with definite aims, the Italian politicians split into numerous parties, separated by conflicting political and economic ideals, or particular interests. In a country long politically divided, making its first tottering steps toward nationhood, this lack of a unified perspective in government, coupled with the unfavorable economic conditions under which the start was made, deprived Italy of her chance to acquire a good share in the last unclaimed colonial

¹Italy's Prime Minister between 1887 - 1896.

²Hentze, op. cit. pp. 193-196.

territories.¹ Nevertheless, Italy for the first time in modern history was slowly emerging as a colonial power. At the turn of the century, she had already well entrenched in Eritrea on the Red Sea and Somaliland on the Indian Ocean, and she had her eyes turned toward the rich vastness of interior Abyssinia, upon whose wealth and goodwill the value of these two colonies depended.² The reversal at Adwa in 1896 had taught Italy that she could not hope to gain her ends without strong and unified popular support at home and prearranged agreements and understandings with her powerful Mediterranean dominators, a lesson which stood her in good stead in her diplomatic struggle over Libya a few years later. In the second decade of the twentieth century Italy turned her attention to the territory between Egypt and Tunisia, which was larger and of greater political importance, because of its position in the center of the Mediterranean, than her other colonies.

The Italians achieved a large degree of national cohesion for the first time during the World War I. But after that hard test came the disillusionment of the peace conference. The Italians felt that the fruits of their national effort were lost to them by the inefficiency of their parliamentary government and the greediness of their allies. Italy was looking for a regime that would satisfy her imperialist aspiration, which the democratic regime had failed to achieve.³

¹Ibid., p. 195.

²M. H. Macartney, Italy's Foreign and Colonial Policy, London, 1938, pp. 276-279.

³Italian Library of Information, Colonialism in Africa, New York, 1940, p. 94.

With the ascendancy of Signor Mussolini and his Fascist party to power in Italy, it became obvious that a colonial policy would be vigorously followed. The Fascist regime aimed at transforming Italy into a military power. The idea of a resurgent Italy restoring the glories of ancient Rome had always been present in the political philosophy of Fascism, and for a long time Fascism had been training Italians to think imperialistically. Schools, literature, the military organizations of the Fascist party,¹ even the face of Rome teemed with the ideas of empire.

The causes which impelled the Fascist government to pursue such an expansionist policy were economic and political. Besides being a country lacking those materials which are essential to large industrial development, Italy had a very dense population, which was continually and rapidly increasing.

The protectionist barriers and export and differential duties, which were established after World War I in many countries, inflicted great damage upon Italian trade. The economic crisis which fell upon the world in 1929 further aggravated her economic situation so that she saw no other way of keeping on her feet except that of obtaining territories which should provide her with adequate natural resources and absorb her surplus population.² Colonial expansion alone could offer her such possibilities.

The necessity for Italian expansion was foreshadowed in an

¹Macartney, op. cit., pp. 302-303.

²Ibid., pp. 283-289.

unmistakable manner by Signor Grandi, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, in a speech delivered to the Senate on June 4, 1932, when he drew the attention of the world to the Italian question.¹ "Italy," he said, "must also put her problem before the world. It is a vital problem, directly connected with our future, a problem of undisturbed peace and the work of a nation of forty-two millions, which will amount to fifty millions in fifteen years. How can these millions of people live and continue to develop if they are compressed into a territory half the size of France, with no supplies of raw materials and no possibility of renewing their stocks, confined and held captive within a closed sea? This vital problem of Italy must form part of the great problem of international reconstruction. We cannot tolerate that the recognition of Italy as a colonial factor should be overlooked. Such recognition would merely be a just revision of an erroneous judgment and a necessity dictated by the general interest of properly applying and making good use of the surplus energies of a nation worthy of greater prosperity."²

Furthermore, the policy of territorial expansion and the idea of the resurrection of the Roman Empire were used by the Fascist Party as political capital for home consumption, to strengthen the Fascist dictatorship in Italy and to prolong the enslavement of her people. This vigorous expansionist policy of Fascist Italy had planned the bloody conquest of Abyssinia in 1935, the flagrant intervention in the Spanish Civil War in 1937 and finally the

¹Ibid., pp. 284-285.

²Ibid.

outrageous occupation of little Albania in 1939. Despite all these, the Fascist cry for more territories grew louder and louder. Italy elaborated her expansionist plan to include Nice, Savoy, Corsica, Tunisia and even Egypt.¹

It was obvious to the western democracies that the Italian expansionist policy had no limit and must be checked by all available means. Meanwhile the Italians realized that their dream of converting the Mediterranean into an Italian or Roman sea, Mare Nostrum, could not be realized short of war with Britain and France, the dominant powers in the Mediterranean. Thus Italy in seeking friends to bolster her position was obliged to associate herself with dissatisfied, dynamic Germany to form the Berlin-Rome Axis. Hence the struggle between Italy and the western powers took a special direction, which finally culminated with her entry into the war against the western allies in the summer of 1940.

The distasteful defeat of the Axis power brought an end, perhaps for ever, to the Italian dream of Empire.

The Diplomatic Struggle over Tripoli and Cyrenaica

Italy since her unification, completed in 1870, had been concerned with her geographical position in the Mediterranean and her consequent fear of the expansion of France, Austria and Russia. It might be said that the new kingdom was not afraid of England only because she did not dare to do anything else than remain on friendly

¹Ibid., pp. 333-335.

terms. Italy knew that she could never face the British Navy. Hence her insistence that the Triple Alliance must never have a point against England. In the years previous to the turn of the century, her principal antagonism had been towards France, an antagonism that was reciprocated, for France could not forgive her for joining Germany and Austria in the Triple Alliance.

The Mediterranean agreements of 1887 with England and with Austria were intended to safeguard Italy's position in the Mediterranean.¹ Both in these agreements and in the Triple Alliance, the status quo in the Mediterranean was the object guaranteed; and in the latter, as renewed in 1887, it was made clear that, in case of French aggression in Morocco or in Tripoli, the casus belli would arise on Italy's demand. For, during these years, the principal fear of Italy was that France might seize Tripoli. It is true that the integrity of the Turkish Empire had been guaranteed by the powers both in the Treaty of Paris (1856) and in that of Berlin (1878), but this obligation was held very lightly by the statesmen of Europe. France had occupied Tunis; England, Egypt; and it was plain that only considerations of force, not those of right, would prevent a further dismemberment of Turkey. However, if Tripoli was to be taken, Italy meant to take it.

At Berlin, while the powers were drafting the clause about the integrity of Turkey, they had been very free in their discussion of eventual partition. "By a secret stipulation with England," said the

¹Lewis Dickinson, The International Anarchy, New York, 1926, p. 214.

French Minister Waddington,¹ in 1893, "I obtained carte blanche for France in Tunis, which, later on, permitted us to establish there our protectorate without the occurrence of any European incident."² The permission thus given to France was, of course, secret. But the Italians were already alarmed and had to be placated. Thus in August, 1879, that same Waddington who had received the promise from England declared to the Italian Ambassador on his "word of honor" that "as long as I am a member of the French government nothing of the sort will be attempted; no occupation of Tunis or any other place will take place without your co-operation, without a previous recognition of Italy's right to occupy another point of relative and justly proportioned importance."³ However, nothing more was heard for the moment of compensation for the Italians. Indeed, in a conversation of the previous year, the Italian Ambassador had taken a high line on that subject. "Why will you persist in thinking of Tunis?" Freycinet had asked. "Why not turn your attention to Tripoli, where you will have neither ourselves nor anyone else to contend with?" Where to the Ambassador replied that the suggestion of compensation "reminded me of the advice Bismarck gave to Napoleon III to take Belgium and leave the Rhine provinces alone. I said that we sought possession neither of Tripoli nor of Tunis;

¹ French Minister of Foreign Affairs.

² Dickinson, op. cit., p. 215.

³ Ibid., p. 215.

that we desired only that the regency there be maintained in status quo. I added that Tripoli must not even be mentioned as a compensation should France one day occupy Tunis, unless Tripoli should meantime have ceased to belong to the Ottoman Empire."¹

Nevertheless, France promised that Italy would be informed as long beforehand as possible, should she decide to occupy Tunis. In the course of 1881 France had established her military footing in Tunis. Italian indignation was, perhaps, tinged with regret. From that time on, until the agreement of 1902, there was continual friction between Italy and France. The occupation of Tunis was perhaps the principal reason for Italy's joining the Triple Alliance, and for her insistence, at its renewal in 1887, upon the introduction of the clause which enabled her to call upon Germany for armed support if France "should extend her occupation or her protectorate or her sovereignty, under any form whatsoever, in the North African territories, whether of the vilayet of Tripoli or of the Moroccan Empire." In the same year, 1887, she secured that treaty with England which seemed to suggest that England might support her by war in such a contingency.²

¹Ibid., pp. 215-216.

²The British government in 1887, entered into two agreements with Austria and Italy. The first agreement is dated Feb. 12, 1887. It provided for the status quo in the Mediterranean, the Adriatic, the Aegean, and the Black Sea. The third article runs: "Italy is entirely ready to support the work of Great Britain in Egypt. Great Britain, in her turn, is disposed, in case of encroachments on the part of a third power, to support the action of Italy at every other point whatsoever of the North African Coast district, and especially in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica." Dickinson, The International Anarchy, p. 100.

In 1890, Crispi, the protagonist of Italian claims in Africa, being then in office, a somewhat acute crisis arose. The French were extending the hinterland of Tunis in such a way that it would include territory which Italians held to belong to the hinterland of Tripoli. The point in question was the control of the caravan route from Tripoli to central Africa. The Italians felt that the future of the territory which they intended some day to seize was being compromised. Their trade in central Africa would be interfered with, the "balance of power" in the Mediterranean would be upset. Italy approached Germany, but the Germans held that the Triple Alliance had nothing to do with Tunis. They did, however, approach Lord Salisbury¹ on the subject. But he was unsympathetic. France, he said, "had raised at the Congress of Berlin the question of compensating Italy with Tripoli, but he had opposed the idea." Now he was afraid that if Italy pressed her objection to French expansion in Tunis, France might renew that proposal, and thus precipitate the break-up of the Turkish Empire. Count Hatzfeldt,² on the other hand, was afraid that if Italy's interests were too much neglected, she might be tempted to pass into the other camp. There was some reason for Count Hatzfeldt's fear that Italy might join France. In fact, the Italian Ambassador in Paris held a discussion with M. Ribot,³ in which the question of Italian compensation was definitely approached.

¹British Foreign Secretary.

²Foreign Minister of Germany.

³French Foreign Minister.

In 1890 Crispi¹ fell from office, and his successor Rudini, as Prime Minister, was believed by the Germans and Austrians to be negotiating on friendly terms with France. Thus the Germans became the more anxious to renew the Triple Alliance.

The Italians were in a strong position, and they managed, in the new agreement arrived at in 1891, to secure the inclusion of Tunis among those territories of North Africa where the status quo was to be guaranteed. Presumably their hope was that in this way they could call upon their allies for support in case of further extension of French power in the hinterland.

The next important stage in this history was the agreement between France and Italy in December 1900. Under this agreement it was provided that "if a modification of the political or territorial status of Morocco should result from French action in safeguarding the rights which are the result of the proximity of her territory with that Empire, then Italy would reserve to herself as a measure of reciprocity, the right eventually to develop her influence in regard to Tripolitania and Cyrenaica."²

In plain language, Italy agreed to let France steal Morocco on condition that she in return might steal Tripoli. France was thus squared. Italy, however, still held her hand. Perhaps she was waiting till she had also squared Russia. This was done by the agreement of Racconigi in 1909, the fifth article of which states: "Italy and Russia

¹Dickinson, op. cit., pp. 218-219.

²Ibid., p. 219.

engage themselves to regard with benevolence, the one Russia's interest in the question of the straits, the other Italian interests in Tripoli and Cyrenaica."¹

By the conclusion of the Racconigi agreement Italy had secured the consent of Russia for her annexation of Tripoli, in addition to that of France and of her partners in the Triple Alliance; she had also secured the consent of England. At any rate Signor Giolitti² spoke of the agreement with France and England, which recognized our primary interest in Libya, as a compensation for our disinterestedness in Morocco and Egypt. Everything was thus prepared, as far as the great powers were concerned, and Signor Giolitti, on assuming office in 1911, decided to take the long-anticipated step, by occupying Tripolitania and Cyrenaica by force.

Italian-Turkish Relations and the Tripoli War

For a number of years Italy's relations with Turkey had not been cordial. The Turks, long familiar with the type which was represented in the numerous Italian colonies in the Levant, had not regarded them or their country with any special respect. The promotion of Italy to equal rank with the great powers occurred at a comparatively recent date in history, and Italy, no doubt, had some cause to feel that she had not been treated by the Porte with the consideration a great power expected to receive, and to

¹Ibid., p. 219.

²Italian Prime Minister.

which the elder states had already established their title. At the same time it should be admitted that the attitude of Italy had been such as to arouse the suspicion of a power whose history had been for a century one of gradual and constant territorial dismemberment. Italy was known to have contracted with another power for a free hand there in certain contingencies. Any questions which had from time to time arisen regarding Tripoli had invariably led to interpellations and discussions in the Italian Chamber, which appeared to presume that some acquired right of Italy was being infringed. By the mass of Italians Tripoli had, in so far as it was known, been regarded as already a dependency of the kingdom. It was, therefore, not to be wondered at that the Turkish administration was disposed to regard with mistrust any Italian initiative or enterprise in a province of the Empire so clearly indicated as an Italian sphere of interest.

At the same time a sounder political instinct would have suggested to the Porte the opportuneness of avoiding all acts of provocation there, inasmuch as without the disposal of sea power Turkey could hardly hope to repel aggression, which she might have staved off indefinitely by allowing peaceful penetration.

The cultivation of friendly relations with Italy, moreover, would have seemed a sufficiently obvious policy to adopt, seeing that the two countries had a common interest in preserving the status quo on the eastern side of the Adriatic, which both of them

believed to be menaced.¹

The 1908 revolution in Turkey seemed to afford a good opportunity for a rapprochement, and during the first few months of the new regime it had all the sympathy of Italy, and an Italo-Turkish association was formed for the promotion of commercial exchanges. A comparatively short period sufficed, however, to show that the constitutional administration was even less tractable than the autocratic government of Abdul Hamid. Nevertheless, in February, 1910, the then Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Guicciardini, replied to an interpellation in the Chamber of Deputies on the subject of the protection of the Italian interests in Tripoli with a declaration which it was hoped would restore relations of confidence. "He stated that respect of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire in Africa, as elsewhere, had always been a principle of the Italian foreign policy, and that the Ottoman provinces in North Africa were a factor of great importance for the preservation of the balance of power in the Mediterranean."² It was now more than ever secure as, apart from specific treaties, the new regime would tolerate no infringement of Ottoman rights. The integrity of the Ottoman provinces in Africa was unquestioned and beyond discussion. Within a period of two years from the date at which these declarations were made, Italy occupied these provinces and

¹G.P. Gooch and Harold Temperley, British Documents on the Origins of the War, London, 1933, Vol. IX, p. 259.

²Ibid., p. 259.

announced their annexation to the Crown by Royal decree. The circumstances which led to this change of front must now be considered.

Through 1910 and the early months of 1911, the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs continued to complain of chronic difficulties with the Porte. In Tripoli it was maintained that, while concessions and facilities were readily extended to the subjects of any other country, every Italian undertaking was consistently impeded, and that pressure was exercised locally on the Arabs to prevent them from having any dealings with Italian firms.¹ The large capital investments of the Banco di Roma in property and industrial enterprises were prevented from becoming remunerative. The Italian government in the face of the press attacks was perplexed as to what action to take in order to terminate the situation.

In Tripoli itself, the presence of the truculent Vali and an excitable and perhaps provocative Italian consul-general, resulted in a condition of extreme tension, and rumors began to be circulated of danger to the Italian colony. However, while making every allowance for the exasperation of Italy, it was not possible in the early months of 1911 to regard the situation as one which would justify or lead to war. The efforts of the Italian government to prevent Albanian agitators from conveying arms across the Adriatic and holding meetings in Italy should, it was considered in Italy,

¹Lewis Dickinson, The International Anarchy, New York, 1926, p. 220.

have been appreciated by the Turkish government and, indeed, some indication of a more conciliatory spirit seemed to be afforded by the recall of the Vali of Tripoli, which was followed by the departure of the Italian consul-general on leave.¹

Such was the situation in the early part of the summer. The crisis in the Morocco question and the despatch of a German warship to the port of Agadir synchronized with the first symptoms of a change in the official outlook.

On July 31, the Marquis di San Giuliano, in reply to an enquiry whether a change of the Italian Ambassador at Constantinople indicated any change of policy said "that a year or two ago the Tripoli question practically did not exist, and that with the advent of the new regime it was regarded as finally disposed of. It had, however, been called into being once more by the policy pursued towards Italy by the young Turkish party, and, should France extend her domination over North Africa by acquiring Morocco, the balance of power in the Mediterranean would be affected and public opinion here (Italy) would be so greatly moved, that it might be difficult to resist the pressure for action in Tripoli."²

As time went on, the question of the compensation of Italy for any extension of French dominions in North Africa began to be mooted with insistence in the opposition and independent Italian press. Sicily and the south of Italy, which furnished the majority of the

¹Gooch, op. cit., p. 260.

²Ibid., p. 260.

Italian colony there and looked to the North African coast as the nearest foreign market for their vegetable produce, were unanimously in favor of military action, and even the socialist representatives of the south urged the plea of the advantage which would accrue to labor. The government was strong then in southerners, and both the Minister and the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs were Sicilians. The Banco di Roma, pre-eminently the clerical bank which administered the finances of the Vatican, was deeply involved in Tripolitanian enterprises, and its influence was sufficient to ensure the support of the clerical party. That the Banco di Roma has played an important part in influencing the press, no one for a moment doubted.

By the middle of September, 1911, the voice of the Italian press had become unanimous for action. The Minister for Foreign Affairs declined to accede to the request of the Turkish charge d'affaires that the government should issue a communication dissociating itself from the press campaign. After the actual crisis had taken place he explained that it would have been open to Italy at this time to have adopted some less drastic measure, before having recourse to extreme action, and thus to have justified herself with European opinion.¹ But the only result would have been to delay the inevitable for a short time. The immediate consequences of any attempt to exercise pressure upon Turkey in order to obtain more reasonable treatment for Italians in Tripoli would have been a declaration of the boycott, and, in view of the

¹Ibid., p. 261.

temper of the country, this would have produced a sense of exasperation which would inevitably have led to war. The longer it was deferred the less favorable the local conditions would become; the Turks would have been enabled to prepare for the defence of Tripoli, and the winter sea would render the coast difficult of approach. The danger of a rising in the Balkans, for which hostilities between Italy and Turkey might afford an opportunity, would be minimized if the crisis occurred in the autumn, and would be greatly aggravated if it were postponed till the spring. The Italian attitude may thus be summed up. A long series of incidents and a long period of strained relations with Turkey had produced a situation, the continuance of which was regarded as inconsistent with the national dignity. France was extending her North African dominion over Morocco, and greatly increasing her influence as a Mediterranean power. The only available means of restoring the Mediterranean equilibrium, as far as Italy was concerned, lay in the occupation of Tripoli, which thus became a political necessity, at a moment when the conditions were not unfavorable to success, and when the step could be taken with minimum risk of compromising the general situation. Another argument for action, to which too much weight need not be attached, and which the Italian Prime Minister put forward on several occasions, was the danger of some other power - and yet Germany was not specifically mentioned - making arrangements with Turkey by which the port of Tripoli might be occupied and the prospect of Italy's coveted goal be forever

extinguished.¹

It has been generally assumed that a coup de main in Tripoli had long been premeditated and carefully prepared, and the rapidity of mobilization might seem to justify this assumption. That an expedition might some day be called for without much previous notice had no doubt always been anticipated by the naval and military authorities.

On the night of September 26, the terms of an ultimatum to be handed into the Porte were telegraphed to the Italian charge d'affaires at Constantinople. This ultimatum, which was presented on the 28th, drew attention to the condition of neglect and disorder to which Tripoli and Cyrenaica had been abandoned; owing to geographical proximity, order and progressive government were of vital interest to Italy; in spite of the support which the Italian government had always given to the Ottoman government, both of old and recently, every Italian enterprise in Tripoli had consistently encountered determined and unjustifiable opposition.² At the eleventh hour the Ottoman government had declared itself ready to discuss such economic concessions as did not conflict with the dignity and higher interests of Turkey; but experience had established the uselessness of such negotiations, and reports from Italian consular agents showed that a dangerous agitation against Italians

¹Margot Henzte, Pre-Fascist Italy, London, 1934, pp. 287-288.

²Lewis Dickinson, The International Anarchy, New York, 1926, pp. 223-224.

had been deliberately fomented in Tripoli, involving also the subjects of other nations. The dispatch of an Ottoman transport would only further aggravate the danger of the situation. Under the circumstances, the Italian government found itself compelled to defend its dignity and interests by a military occupation of Tripoli and Cyrenaica, and it requested the Imperial government to give the necessary orders to preclude any opposition, the ensuing situation being left for subsequent settlement between the two governments. A reply was demanded within twenty-four hours from the presentation of the ultimatum, failing which the Italian government would be compelled to adopt the measures necessary to make the occupation effective.

Simultaneously, a telegram was delivered to the representatives of Italy at Athens, Belgrade, Cettinje, Sofia and Bucarest; as well as to the consulates in European Turkey, informing them that the Italian government, for reasons specified and for the protection of its interests and dignity, had been obliged to take measures in Tripoli which might lead to a conflict with Turkey. Whatever the outcome might be, the policy of Italy was still, as always, the maintenance of the territorial status quo in the Balkan peninsula and the consolidation of European Turkey.¹ They must, therefore, not only refrain from encouraging any anti-Turkish movement in the Balkans, but make every effort to prevent any vain hopes or illusions from being formed in consequence of this action. Since

¹ Gooch and Temperly, op. cit., pp. 261-262.

the reply of the Porte to the ultimatum, which was received on the 29th, was unfavorable, a declaration of war was immediately issued. The state of hostilities was regarded as having begun at 2:30 p.m. on that day. The Italian fleet was already concentrating in Tripolitanian waters and a squadron of destroyers left Brindisi to cover the Albanian coast.

Within two weeks most of the important Libyan ports were taken over and the backbone of Turkish resistance was broken. In June of the following year, the first peace proposals were made. These, however, failed and Italy countered by occupying Rhodes and then taking the remainder of the Dodecanese Islands, just off the coast of Turkey proper.

The Turks, who were about to become involved in the first Balkan war, and were also well aware that the powers of Europe would not interfere on their behalf, regarded the Italian invasion of Libya with sour benevolence. In these circumstances Turkey entered into negotiations which culminated in the Treaty of Lausanne (Losanna), October 17, 1912. By it Turkey promised to withdraw all armed forces from Libya, in return for which undertaking, and when it had been accomplished, the Italians agreed to hand back to Turkey the Dodecanese Islands they had occupied during the war.

At the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, Turkey renounced her

¹Dickinson, op. cit., p. 229.

sovereignty and all her rights in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica.¹

Italian Colonial Policy in Libya

When the Italians invaded Libya and the Turks made peace, the native tribes continued their resistance in the name of the Sanusiya.²

¹Margot Hentze, Pre-Fascist Italy, New York, 1939, p. 291.

²The Sanusiya is one of the most recent Islamic orders founded in North Africa. Its founder was an Algerian scholar, Al Sayyid Muhammed ibin Ali al-Sanusi al-Khattabi al Idrisi al Hassani, a very remarkable man, mystic and missionary. He was born of a distinguished family of Sharifs in a village near Mustaghanim in Algeria in 1787. Early in life he became noted for his intelligence, piety and profound learning. He studied and travelled in North Africa, Egypt and Mecca, where he established the first headquarters of the Sanusiya order in 1837. He was compelled to leave Mecca and return to North Africa, where the first Siwa oasis, and later, Jaghbub, became his headquarters. From here the Sanusiya order spread as far as Senegal to the west, and Lake Chad and Sudan to the south.

The Sanusiya is an order of Sufis, a highly orthodox order. It is not a sect but a fraternity. The rigorous orthodoxy of the order, and especially its insistence on conformity to the original teachings of the prophet, meant that the faith and the morals which the prophet preached to the Bedouins of his day, and which they accepted, were equally suited to the Bedouins of Cyrenaica - people who were leading, and still lead, a life like that of the Bedouins of Arabia of the seventh century. The secret of its great success lies in the fact that it was popular with the Bedouins of the Sahara. Despite its rigorous orthodoxy, the order has always been conventional as well. In its early period, it was essentially a missionary order, with the limited aim of bringing by peaceful persuasion the Bedouin Arabs and the people of the Sahara to a fuller understanding of the beliefs and morals of Islam, while giving them at the same time the blessing of civilization, justice, peace, trade and education. Its principles were simply to do good and avoid evil. The Encyclopaedia of Islam, London, 1934, Vol. IV, pp. 154-155.

Although at the end of 1914 the Italians were, on paper, in control of the country, in fact they merely held posts in it, on or near the coast, and had very little authority outside these posts, which they supplied with difficulty. While the native tribes kept up ceaseless guerrilla activity around the Italian forts, Italy's difficulties were mounting as a by-product of the European war, although she had not yet entered it. When she entered the war in May 1915, she found herself unable to give full attention to her Libyan venture. The immediate result was an almost total evacuation of Tripolitania, where the Italians were able to hold only the city of Tripoli, with a strip of coast to the west of it, and Cyrenaica, where they held only the cities along the coast.¹ During the war, German-Turkish aid to the tribes, in the form of arms and supplies, played a considerable role in prolonging the native resistance. The post-war difficulties and the moral deterioration in Italy prevented any attempt to renew the colonial war in order to reconquer Libya. Thus, Italy signed an agreement with the Arab leaders, whereby she gave the Libyans the Constitution of 1919.

At the end of 1922, the Fascist revolution culminated in the March on Rome and the new government at once made up its mind to reconquer Tripolitania and Cyrenaica by arms. Obviously, if the Fascists wanted to have the influence they thought was their due in the Councils of Europe and to embark on an expansionist policy

¹M.H. Macartney and Paul Cremona, Italy's Foreign and Colonial Policy., London, 1938, p. 280.

in the Mediterranean and North Africa, they would first have to show that they were capable of defeating the natives of Libya. In this war of reconquest, which lasted ten years, the Fascist government was guilty of all kinds of untold cruelties and atrocities in its effort to intimidate the native population and break their will for resistance. Immense concentration camps for the entire tribal population of Cyrenaica were laid out. The Bedouins were removed to the Barqa al Baida and Sirtica. In this arid solitude, they were herded into the smallest possible camps in the summer of 1930, where hunger and disease took a heavy toll of the imprisoned population.

The two Italo-Libyan wars broke the resistance of the native population and devastated their country. The damage was greater, however, in Cyrenaica, where the resistance was stiffer and of longer duration, than in Tripolitania. It is estimated that between 1911 and 1932 Cyrenaica lost about one third of its population by death and emigration.¹ Losses of livestock are difficult to estimate, but they were certainly enormous.

Patriotism and religious faith, as well as the geographical conditions of the Libyan desert and the Bedouin way of life, gave the people of Libya the courage to endure the hardships of their struggle. The Italo-Sanusi war began as a war against Turkey, but it slowly became a simple struggle of Libyan Bedouins and peasants for survival, for their lands and for freedom to enjoy their own way of life.

¹Evans Pritchard, The Sanuse of Cyrenaica, London, 1949, p. 189.

A sullen Arab population in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, and a hostile Arab and Muslim world were, in view of the coming storm, so clearly contrary to Italian interests, that a more conciliatory policy, at any rate in words, was adopted, and Marshal Balbo¹ was entrusted with the difficult task of putting it into effect against a background of slaughter and repression. But it was too late.

As far as the Italian administrative policy and the status of the Arabs in Libya are concerned, the Italians made efforts, during the period between 1917 and 1922, to build up a democratic system of government in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica.² This was largely due to defeatism and political unrest at home. It sprang also from a genuine belief in peace and Wilsonian principles among the men in power at that time in Italy. According to the Royal Decree of October 31, 1919, the natives of the country received a status equal to that of Italians. They also received guarantees of personal liberty, inviolability of domicile and property, and electoral rights (a local parliament was set up in both regions, at Tripoli and Benghazi). Respect of religion and local custom were guaranteed, and liberty of the press and the right to hold meetings were recognized. The Arabic language was compulsory in the schools and in certain official publications. In general all the inhabitants of Libya, whether Arab or Italian, were equal before the law.

¹Air Marshal Italo Balbo, governor-general of Libya from 1934 to 1938.

²Ibid., pp. 213-214.

The Fascist government which came to power in 1922 abolished the Constitution of 1919 and with it went the local parliaments. It issued the Royal Decree of June 26, 1927, to take its place. In a sense this was a new and a Fascist constitution. By it the Arabs ceased to be Italian citizens (cittadini italiani) and became Italian Libyan citizens (cittadini italiani libici). They also lost the electoral rights and the parliaments were abolished. There was no mention of the liberty of the press, of the right to hold meetings, of freedom from military conscription, and of the protection of the Arabic language in public instruction. In general, the Arabs were no longer equal with the Italians before the law.¹

Arab resistance in both Tripolitania and Cyrenaica was still causing the Italians much trouble even as late as 1929, and on both military and political grounds it was deemed advisable to place the two regions under one single direction. This was done by the Royal Decree of January 24, 1929, by which Libya was divided into four provincial commissariats (Tripoli, Misurata, Bengazi, Derna.)²

In view of the coming struggle between the powers of Europe, already seen by Mussolini to be inevitable, the Italian government considered it advisable to pay more attention to the feelings of its colonists and native peoples. A royal Decree was promulgated on January 9, 1939, declaring Libya to be an integral part of the

¹Ibid., p. 214.

²Italian Library of Information: Libya, New York, 1940, p. 38.

Kingdom of Italy, its four provinces becoming the 97th, 98th, 99th and 100th provinces of the kingdom. Italian colonists no longer had to feel that they had left their fatherland for the colony had become Terra Italiana. The Quarta Sponda, Italy's "Fourth Shore,"¹ had become political fact.

At the same time, to quiet any uneasiness which the incorporation of their country into the Kingdom of Italy might create among those educated Arabs, whose services the Italians might need, the decree offered the Arabs a new, special citizenship. This citizenship could be acquired, without prejudice to Muslim personal law, by persons who had reached the age of eighteen, provided they had a good record and had in some way or other served the state, or could read and write Italian. This status carried with it certain privileges which could be exercised only in Italian African territories.

Concerning the Italian economic policy in Libya in general and the colonization policy in particular, the Fascist government made up its mind right from the beginning to exploit whatever meager resources Libya possessed for the benefit of Italy, with complete disregard for the welfare of the native population. Declarations, speeches and announcements by leading Fascist personalities revealed, beyond any doubt, the fate which the Italians

¹Da Quarta Sponda d'Italia, more properly means the fourth shore of Italy, the other three being the Ligurian, the Tyrrhenian and the Adriatic Coast. Italian Library of Information: Libya, New York, 1940, p. 38.

intended for Libya and its population. Here I quote Marshal Graziani¹ to give an illustrative example of their intention. He declared that:

"the nomads are enemies and destroyers of agriculture. Everywhere, in fact, the nomad has passed he has destroyed woods, trees and fields. Therefore, the nomads have no justification and no right to claim to stay in areas of assured development such as those of the Cyrenaican plateau, rich in promise of trees and cereal culture, but ought to be excluded from it for ever, leaving room for thousands and thousands of Italian arms which are stretched out there, anxious to begin again to till and make fruitful this ancient Roman earth."²

In any case, the Italians intended to take the best arable lands of the country for themselves. Mass Italian colonies were planted on the best native lands, excluding the original owners from pasturing and sowing, section by section, as it was taken over for exploitation.

Three main reasons impelled Italy to adopt a policy of planned, intensive colonization in Libya. First, an outlet had to be found for her rising population, one of the fastest-growing in Europe. The deliberate policy of stimulating the birth-rate by a variety of financial inducements, which Fascist Italy had pursued more thoroughly than any other nation, had increased this need for an outlet. So had the partial closing of the once wide-open door to transatlantic migration.³

¹General Rodolfo Graziani, vice-governor and commander-in-chief of the Italian forces in Libya.

²Evans Pritchard, The Sanusi of Cyrenaica, London, 1949, p. 198.

³M. H. Macartney and Paul Cremona, Italy's Foreign and Colonial Policy, London, 1938, p. 283.

Secondly, like so many other countries shut out and shut in by the world's tariff walls, Italy was following a policy of autarchy. Entirely self-sufficient she can never be; but she saw no reason why Libya, once reputed as a granary of Imperial Rome, should not help to feed the teeming motherland of the Fascist Empire. The idea had that imaginative touch which characterized so many of the projects of a regime, which continually harked back to a more glorious history. There is no doubt, too, that the seed of this new policy of self-sufficiency flourished on the memory of the economic sanctions imposed by the League of Nations powers against Italy during the Abyssinian War.¹

The third reason for the Libyan colonization scheme is plain from a glance at the map of the Mediterranean. The strategic value of the land between Tunisia and Egypt on a coast dominated by France and Britain needs no emphasis. Italy was seeking a cheaper and more effective way of garrisoning this territory than by troops manning a barren shore and provisioned almost entirely by the homeland. With a considerable Italian population in Libya, the military as well as the economic situation would no doubt be transformed. Garrisons, therefore, would be recruited from the Italian colonists and would live on the country itself.²

The Italian mass colonization of Libya presented an acute

¹ Martin Moore, Fourth Shore, London, 1940, pp. 14-15.

² Grothe Hugo, Libyen und di Italienisthen Kraftfelder in Nordafrika, Leipzig, 1941, pp. 22-23.

racial and cultural problem between the native Arabs and the Italian colonists. Even had racial miscegenation not been prohibited, it could hardly have taken place between Catholic Italians and Muslim Arabs. Cultural assimilation was also unlikely because both Italians and Arabs were civilized peoples with a long cultural history behind them, and it was highly improbable that the Arabs would give up their religion, law and language. No other solution seemed feasible, therefore, than that advocated by Balbo - the policy of parallel development in cultural matters and structural coordination within the framework of the Fascist state. The Arabs were to remain Arabs in speech, religion, personal law, customs and manners, but their tribal structure was to disappear and its place was to be taken by political and economic institutions similar to those of their Italian fellow-Libyans.

"We shall have in Libya not rulers and ruled, but Catholic Italians and Muslim Italians, the one and the other united in the enviable fortune of being the constructive elements in a great and mighty organism, the Fascist Empire. Rome will thus show herself to be once again and always the grand and fruitful Mother of people."¹

The events of World War II in Libya revealed clearly the erroneous assumption of this policy and that the collaboration between the native Arabs and the Italian colonists in this part of the Fascist Empire was no more than a superficial one.

Italian policy in Libya, like the colonial policies of other European powers, was full of contradictions and inconsistency. It

¹ Evans Pritchard, The Sanusi of Cyrenaica, London, 1949, pp. 209-210.

is interesting to follow the changes this policy underwent during the thirty years between Italy's occupation of the country and her entry into World War II. They were tactical changes demanded by the development of local, domestic and international situations. There was no fundamental difference between the aims of the Fascist government and those of pre-Fascist governments. All intended to wrest Libya from its inhabitants by force of arms and by peopling it with Italians to exploit it for Italian economic, political and above all strategic, purposes. The Italians were attempting no more than other colonial powers had done before them, but they had waited too long, till the tide of colonial expansion was turning and the right of Europeans to rob native peoples of their lands was beginning to be challenged.

Even so, it was not of their choosing or because of humane considerations, but on account of military weakness, incompetence and domestic difficulties, that the Italians made a truce with the Sanusi in 1917, by which the native population secured numerous concessions. As soon as Mussolini had restored order in Italy, he resumed the war Giolitti had begun. When Marshal Graziani had crushed resistance, the original plan of colonization was acted upon. From Italy the migratory swarms of peasants, officials, traders and hangers-on of all kinds threatened the very existence of the native population and especially of the poor peasants and the Bedouins, who saw themselves being forced either to eke out their lives in the desert as a scarcely tolerated class of shepherds, or to sink to the level of landless wage-earners in the country districts and of unskilled

laborers in the towns. The Italians intended this to be their fate, and it might well have been so, if events in Europe had not first caused misgivings in Rome and afterwards led to the destruction of the Italian armies in North Africa and their ejection from the continent.

CHAPTER III

LIBYA IN WORLD POLITICS

Libyan Nationalist Movement

Until 1912, when Turkey surrendered Libya to Italy, the vilayets of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica were part of the Ottoman Empire. Very little is known about the political situation in Libya during the three centuries of the Ottoman rule, but one may say with some confidence that the Bedouins of the two vilayets were little affected by Turkish rule. The tribes as a whole continued to lead their traditional way of life and settle their own affairs among themselves. In 1711 a rebellion in Tripoli against the Sultan's authority led to the emergence of a local Janissary dynasty, the Karamanlis, who for a time also exercised control over Cyrenaica. During this period of Karamanli rule, from 1711 until the Turks reconquered the country in 1835, Libya had a quasi-independent government. But this Karamanli rebellion could not be considered as a part of the Libyan nationalist movement, since the Libyan people did not take an active part in it, and since the national consciousness in Libya was too weak to convert the Karamanli rebellion into a nationalist struggle like that of Mohammed Ali in Egypt. The Turks returned to Libya about the time the Grand Sanusi founded his order in Cyrenaica. As the Sanusiya order gained the confidence of the Bedouins and became accepted as their spokesman, it was necessary for

the Ottoman authorities to take it into consideration in their dealings with the tribes of the interior. The Order made it possible for the different tribes to express themselves as a unit politically for the first time in their relations with the outside world. The tribes provided the Order with a social system, and the Order gave to that system a political organization at a time when it began to come into more direct contact with political forces outside tribal society.¹

The geographical conditions in Libya, its remoteness from the center of the Ottoman Empire, its poverty, and the social structure of its population, together with the fact that the Turks had enough troubles elsewhere without alienating to no purpose a powerful Islamic order and its warlike Bedouin supporters - all these served to make the Turks indifferent to what happened in Libya and compelled them to recognize the Sanusi Order and to grant it a great deal of authority over the population in Cyrenaica and also some parts of Tripolitania.

The Sanusiya acquired from its central position between the Ottoman authority and the local tribes a pre-eminence in the interior which led to the tribal system's becoming even in Ottoman times a "Prote-state with an embryonic government of its own."² The tribes first began to see themselves as a nation through the Sanusiya's relations with the Turkish administration.

¹Evans Pritchard, The Sanusi of Cyrenaica, London, 1949, p. 91.

²Ibid., p. 99.

The Constitutional revolution of 1908 in Turkey not only made a great difference to the political situation in Libya, but at the same time outraged the people of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, for in the place of the Moslem Empire of the Ottoman Caliphs, the young Turks wished to substitute a pan-Ottoman empire under the leadership of Turkey, to the cultural, religious and political disadvantage of the Arab people - a policy which was resented and opposed not only in Libya, but by Arabs all over the Arab world.

After the withdrawal of the Turkish forces following the Lausanne Treaty, 1912, the Sanusiya Order claimed the status of a government of a semi-autonomous state and as such it led the resistance to Italian arms.

The Period of the Accords (1917-23)

In 1916 Sayyid Muhhammed Idris took over the leadership of the Sanusiya Order. His policy was quite different from that of his predecessor (Sayyid Ahmad) who advocated the idea that the Order should continue to follow the Ottoman Caliph, but only as a religious order and without territorial attachments. Under Sayyid Idris' policy emphasis was put upon the development of the Order into an Arab Emirate. European powers with interests in the country were forced now to deal with the only person capable of speaking for the population collectively. Thus the Order had achieved diplomatic status. With the termination of the dependency of the Order on the Ottoman Caliph, it lost its religious character and became an almost purely political movement.

Following the Sanusiya defeat in Egypt in the winter of 1915 and the allied blockade of the Libyan coast, which cut the food supply from abroad and starved the population, Sayyid Idris approached the Allies who, on their part, desired peace and security in this area so that they could free badly needed forces to be used elsewhere. Prior to the negotiation with the Sanusi, England, Italy and France came to an understanding that Sayyid Idris should not be afforded recognition as an autonomous ruler, although they would allow him to administer some of the oases under the sovereignty of the occupying state.¹

The hard and long bargain of the negotiations between Sayyid Idris and the Allies culminated in the agreement of Akrama which was signed in April 1916. According to this agreement the status quo was preserved, the Italians being left in control of those parts of Cyrenaica in which they had established themselves - the coastal towns and a few inland posts - and the Sanusiya Order retaining the rest of the country. But although Sayyid Muhammed Idris was not formally recognized as more than the head of a religious order, he was, in fact and of necessity, treated as though he were, also, the secular ruler of an independent people.

The modus vivendi of Akrama was, in fact, a truce rather than a treaty. It brought military action to a close, but left political questions for future settlement. Italy did not renounce her claim to sovereignty and the Sanusiya did not concede it to her. However,

¹Ibid., p. 134.

the Order recognized the Italian de facto control of the towns and the Italians on their part recognized the de facto rule of the Order in the remainder of the country.¹

Chaos and moral deterioration in Italy after World War I had prevented any attempt to renew the colonial war of reconquest in Libya. Thus the Italian government signed with the Arab leaders of Libya the agreement of Qalaat al-Zaituna in the Spring of 1919.² This agreement was supplemented in June, 1919, by a constitution giving the Arabs a parliament, Italian citizenship and exemption from taxation. In theory an Arab republic (Al Jumhuriya al Trablusiya), founded in the previous year under Turco-Germaniel influence, now ruled the country through its Committee of Reform at Misurata under the leadership of Ramadan al Shtaiwi. This Committee of Reform made preparations to achieve the complete independence of Tripolitania from Italian rule by securing agreement in principle to a Tripolitanian Emirate from an assembly of notables at Ghariyan in November, 1921. The deputation which carried this resolution to Rome, although it received no official encouragement, found much support among the Italian communist and socialist parties.

In October of the same year Cyrenaica was given a constitution similar to that granted to Tripolitania, and it lasted until March, 1923. Furthermore, to appease the people of Cyrenaica, the Italian government agreed that the agreement of Akrama with the Sanusi should

¹Ibid., pp. 145-146.

²Ibid., p. 147.

be superseded by a new agreement, the accord of Al-Rajma of October 25, 1920. By this new agreement, Sayyid Idris was given the hereditary title of "Sanusi Amir," with the honorary title of Highness, and was created head of the autonomous administration of the oases of Jaghbub, Aujila, Jalu and Kafra, with the right to use Ajdabiya as the seat of his administration.¹

Despite all these agreements, the situation in Libya at this time could not, in any case, have lasted long. It became clear to all, especially after the Fascists had gained control in Italy in 1922, that hostilities would sooner or later break out again and the matter was brought to a head by the Amir's attitude on the Tripolitanian issue.

The Arabs of Tripolitania, finding themselves in difficulties, sought to extend their front in the struggle against the Italians by reaching an agreement with the Sanusi. At the end of 1921, their leaders held a meeting at Sirte at which Sanusi representatives from Cyrenaica were present. This meeting carried the decisions of the assembly of Ghariyan a step farther by sending a deputation to Sayyid Idris at Ajdabiya in April, 1922, to offer him the Emirate of all Libya. The Sayyid refused to commit himself, for the acceptance of the offer would have brought him into conflict with Italy, and to have turned it down would have alienated from him those Tripolitanian Arabs who genuinely sympathized with the Sanusiya. Faced with this dilemma, he tried to mediate between Italy and the Arabs of

¹Ibid., pp. 148-149.

Tripolitania, but he was informed in forcible terms by the colonial government that any interference on his part in the affairs of Tripolitania would be considered a breach of the Accord of Al Rajma. In August the committee elected by the Assembly of Sirte had forwarded to Sayyid Idris the Madhbata (Petition) dated July 28, 1922, formally investing him with the Emirate of Tripolitania.¹ Notwithstanding his hesitancy, Sayyid Idris, under great pressure from his advisers, accepted the Emirate. It appeared to him that the Italians intended to make war whatever course he took and that if such was the case he might just as well have the Tripolitanian Arabs on his side. Seeing the imminence of war and feeling that he had compromised himself so deeply with the Italians over a number of years that his presence in the country could only be an embarrassment to the population, he chose exile in Egypt. Here he continued to represent the forces of resistance without compromising the aspirations of his country.

When the Fascists took over power in Italy they made it clear from the first day that their intention was to reconquer Tripolitania and Cyrenaica by force. They declared that all accords and conventions made between the Italian government and the Libyans were null and void. The days of Socialdemocrazia were over and military conquest, domination and colonization were the order of the day. The ancient Roman provinces were once again to be peopled by the sons and daughters of Rome.²

¹Ibid., pp. 153-155.

²Ibid., p. 156.

During the Fascist rule the Libyan nationalist movement was stifled and the struggle for freedom and independence was brutally suppressed. The leaders of the movement met their fate either on the battlefield or on the gallows. However, a few of them managed to escape to Egypt where they continued their struggle. Such was the situation in Libya until the outbreak of World War II.

With the elimination of Italian rule in 1943 and the establishment of the British Military Administration, the Libyan people enjoyed some kind of political freedom. Thus the Libyan nationalist movement began to take shape under the guidance of the newly formed political organizations.

During the period of the British Military Administration several political parties were formed. The most important among them were: the National Congress of Cyrenaica (El Mutamar el Watam el Am), which was composed of two political organizations: the National Front, which represented the Sanusi point of view, and the Omar el Mukhtar Club, which represented the standpoint of the intelligentsia and the urban population.¹ Thus the National Congress was the real representative of Cyrenaica.

In Tripolitania six political parties were in existence at the time when the Four Power Commission visited that country in October, 1947.² However, only three of them had large popular support:

¹The Four Power Commission of investigation for the former Italian colonies: Report on Cyrenaica, p. 7.

²Idem., Report on Libya, p. 9.

the Nationalist Party, the United National Front and the Free National bloc. In addition there was the National Council for the Liberation of Libya, formed of Tripolitanian exiles, which had its headquarters in Cairo.

Despite the differences between the various political parties in both Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, their programs regarding the future of their country were identical. They demanded immediate and complete independence, unity of the three provinces, Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan, and, finally, membership in the Arab League.

In October, 1939, when Italy's participation in World War II seemed imminent, the Cyrenaican and Tripolitanian leaders in Egypt met at Alexandria and informed the British Ambassador in Cairo that they recognized Sayyid Idris as their Emir and that he could speak on their behalf. At a second meeting of these leaders in August, 1940, after Italy had declared war, it was decided to form a Libyan force to co-operate with the British army in the western desert. This was gladly accepted by the British authorities, and a Libyan Arab Force was recruited from among the Libyan exiles in Egypt and later from Cyrenaica, after the first British occupation. This force rendered the Allies great service in fighting the Axis forces in North Africa, to which Mr. Eden paid tribute in the House of Commons on January 8, 1942, when he declared that "His Majesty's Government was determined that the Sanusi should not come again under Italian domination."¹ It was, therefore, on their participation in the war

¹Pritchard, op. cit., p. 227.

on the side of the Allies that the Libyan nationalists based their just claim for self-determination as a victorious nation.

Unity in the Libyan National Movement

Consideration of the future status of Libya was not limited to the alternatives of independence or trusteeship, or to who was to be the administering authority in the event of agreement among the big powers. In addition negotiations involved proposals to partition Libya into two or possibly three separate entities, with each segment falling under a distinct political regime. The unity or division of Libya was further complicated by the country's geographical conditions, historical background and finally by internal political movements. In brief the question of Libyan unity versus division was a controversial matter affected by geographical conditions and influenced by international as well as local politics.

Throughout the history of Libya one is struck with the fact that only on rare occasions has the area constituted a united political entity. Its history is rather the history of two distinct territories, Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, which followed similar though not identical courses, and between which there have never been firm bonds of union.

The division of Libya into Cyrenaica and Tripolitania down through the ages is no mere quirk of history. It reflects, rather, the basic geographic character of the territory. A great natural barrier, the Gulf of Sirte, and the projection of the Libyan desert along its 400-mile shore, divides Cyrenaica from Tripolitania, limiting

communication between the two territories and to a very large extent shaping their economies.¹ Trade between the two provinces has played a minor role, and the movement of the nomadic tribes in both territories has been north-south. At best, the unity of Libya is a negative unity of the desert void between Tunisia and the Nile Valley.

It would seem that there is little basis for an agreement in favor of a united Libya. However, these factors do not categorically rule out a consideration of Libyan unity, for precedent and experience, while often being important guides to human behavior, are not necessarily fixed guideposts to every course of action. With regard to Tripolitania and Cyrenaica this may well prove to be the case, for while the history of the territories does not lean toward unity, at the same time it does not point up any basic incompatibilities or rivalries between them. It may also be noted that although the economies of the two territories are independent of each other, there is a general resemblance between them.

Both areas are sparingly endowed by nature, and in both, with the exception of the north-eastern Cyrenaican plateau, which enjoys adequate rainfall, the basic problem in land development is a shortage of water. In other words aridity is the characteristic feature of both areas. One can easily imagine the great benefit both territories would derive from a concerted approach to their economic problems that would result from a united Libya. Moreover the people of both

¹Jean Depois, La Colonization Italienne en Libye, Paris, 1935, pp. 34-36.

Tripolitania and Cyrenaica possess many of the attributes of a single nationality. They speak the same language, practice the same religion, share common ethnic origins, and face similar economic and social problems. All these are important factors which strengthen Libyan unity and offset the differentiating factors.

Determining a balance between integrating and differentiating factors is not simply a task of examining the history, economy and geography of Libya, of surveying the views of its people and of then arriving at a categorical conclusion. On the whole, history, geography and economic conditions can be considered differentiating factors; on the other hand, the views of the people were strongly on the side of the integrating factors. However, to draw a complete picture of the entire problem of the unity of Libya, international diplomacy must be, and the policy of strategy should also be taken into consideration.

In appraising the relative merits of a united or divided Libya, perhaps the most important factor to be considered is the will of the people. That the question of unity has received considerable attention from the traditional tribal leaders, and from the newly developed urban middle class and intelligentsia, is demonstrated by their nationalist and separatist talk.

A note addressed to the representatives of the Big Four Powers in Cairo on May 23, 1947, by the National Council for the Liberation of Libya maintains that "Libya, with its three main provinces (Cyrenaica, Tripolitania and Fezzan) forms an indivisible whole, a

unit in fact incapable of division," and declares that "the Libyans demand the unity of country from the Egyptian frontier in the east to those of Tunisia and Algeria in the west."¹ Unity versus separation has been the chief concern of all political leaders in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica ever since the ejection of the Italians from those two provinces. The nationalist groups in both territories, composed largely of the Sanusi leaders in Cyrenaica and of the small urban intelligentsia and middle class in Benghazi and Tripoli, were in general agreement on the following ultimate objectives:

(1) independence, (2) unity of Cyrenaica, Tripolitania and Fezzan, and (3) membership in the Arab League.² However, largely due to the Sanusi factor the struggle to achieve these objectives through an immediate program of specific action was a hard and protracted one. The Bedouin population of Cyrenaica expressed its political desires through the notables of the Sanusi Order and the tribal leaders of the National Front (el Jebha el Wataniya), together with the Omar el Mukhtar Club, which represented the view of the urban middle class and the intelligentsia. While both groups from the National Congress advocated an independent Sanusi Emirate for Libya, they differed in their emphasis. To the Omar el Mukhtar Club Libyan unity is of primary importance, with the establishment of a Sanusi regime a secondary matter; the National Front (Jebha) places the Sanusi Emirate first and foremost in its program.

¹The note has been published by the Karnak Press, Cairo.

²Four Power Commission of investigation for the former Italian Colonies; Report on Libya, p. 9.

In Tripolitania the leading political groups advocated a united Libya, but they would not all agree to the establishment of a Sanusi Emirate over Tripolitania. Only one of the three leading tripolitanian parties, the United National Front, favored, at first, Libyan unity under Sanusi, while the two other leading political parties, the Nationalist Party (el Hizb El Watani) and the Free National bloc (Kutla el Ahrar) both favored a united Libya but not under the Sanusi.

As a result of the resolution adopted on November 21, 1949, by the General Assembly of the United Nations, recommending the independence of a united Libya within a period of two years, the Tripolitani-ans and the Cyrenaicans reconciled their political differences and agreed that a united federal state of Libya should be formed under a constitutional monarchy of the Sanusi dynasty. (Figure 2)

This important shift in Tripolitanian attitude toward the Sanusi was attributable to two factors: first, the strength of the Sanusi in Cyrenaica was such that it might have led to the establishment of a separate state in this territory if a solution for unity was not reached, and secondly, the Tripolitani-ans feared that failure to reach an agreement with Cyrenaica might result in the return of the Italian rule.

International Bargaining

From the end of the war up to November, 1949, when the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted its resolution for the final disposition of the Italian colonies, the Big Four Powers (United

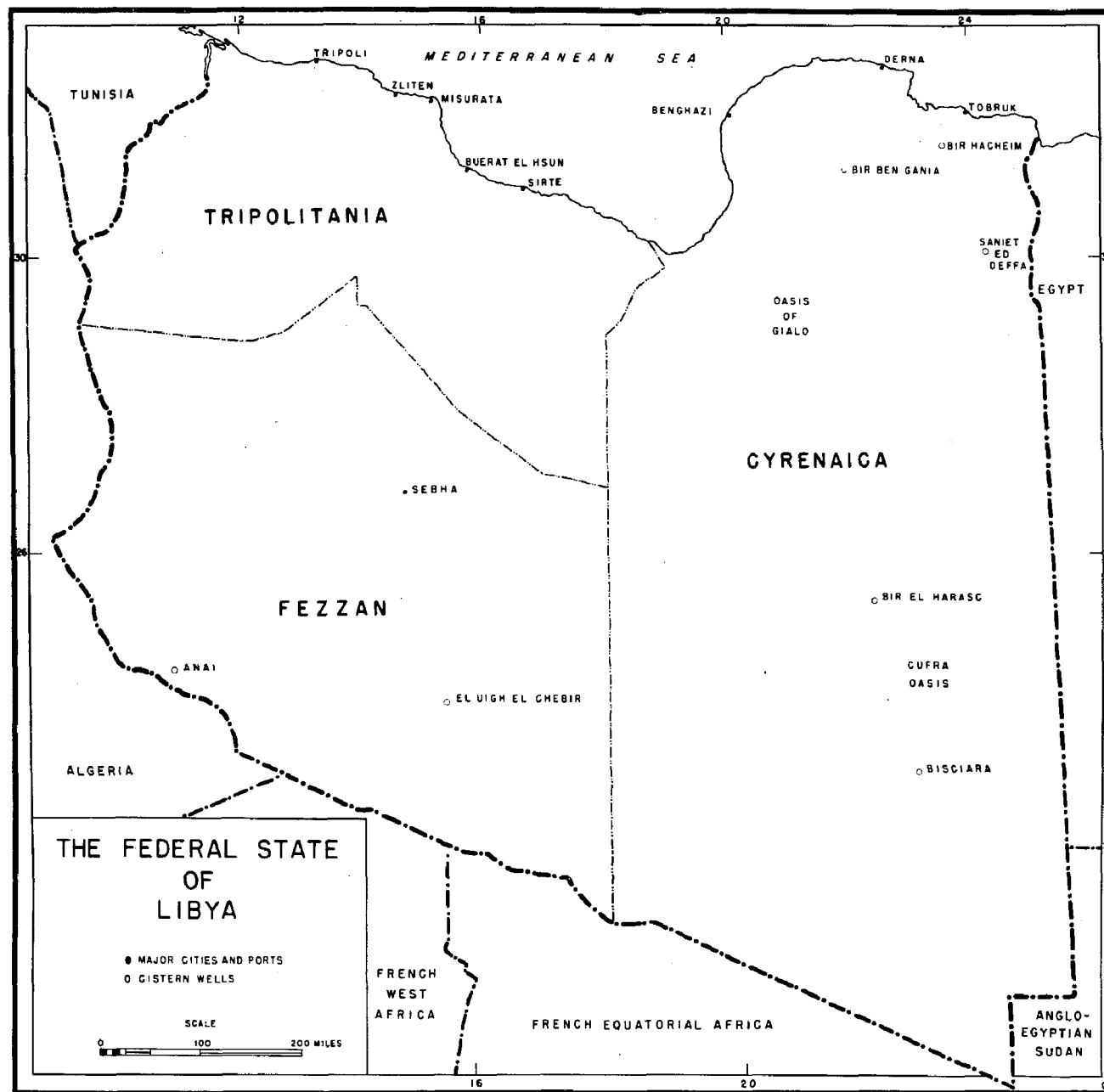


FIG. 2

States, Soviet Union, Great Britain and France) wrangled at length, and at times with bitterness, over the future of the ex-Italian colonies, particularly Libya.

The destiny of Libya, in the normal course of events, should have been decided in 1947 by the Treaty of Paris which framed the allied settlement with Italy. But the failure of the Allies to reach an agreement, either in open debate or in their more intimate conferences, made necessary a stop-gap agreement giving time for further thought. All that was decided in Paris, therefore, was to record the sole decision to which no exception was taken, namely that Italy should renounce her title to the colonies. The Treaty of Paris, reached on February 10, 1947, and formally ratified in September, 1948, required that Italy renounce "all right and title" to her former African possessions and leave the future arrangement respecting them to the decision of the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain and France, who were obliged within a year of the treaty's coming into force to make a settlement or, failing that, to submit the question to the General Assembly of the United Nations for a recommendation which they agreed to accept and implement. Also, according to the treaty, the deputies of the Foreign Ministers were authorized to continue study of the question, using such commissions of investigation for the purpose as might be required.

The issues involved in the future of Libya extended far beyond the affirmed desire of each of the great powers to ensure

the welfare of native peoples and to shape a solution which would be in the best interest of the international community. If there were only these matters to consider, it could be assumed that a practical compromise would have been reached despite the most divergent views, sustained with conviction and sincerity by each of the principal parties. But the inescapable fact was that the fate of Libya had to be determined, in the final analysis, by the character of the power relationships issuing from the diplomatic duel in the eastern Mediterranean. The outcome of this duel, conducted on a broad field, and having as a prize the control of a strategically vital area, rich in oil and dominating some of the most important international routes of communications, would decide the degree to which the spirit of humanitarianism and internationalism could infuse the final settlement.

The importance of Libya lies not in its material riches nor in the advantages which it affords for European colonization, in both of which its value is negligible by present standards, but that, now, more than ever before, it represents a strategic outpost for the control of northeast Africa and the eastern basin of the Mediterranean. The reasons for this significance are to be sought both in the requirements of modern air warfare and in political adjustment to new power factors arising from World War II.

The change in the balance of power brought about by the last war was tremendous. As a result we witnessed the total eclipse of French influence in the eastern Mediterranean and its weakening

elsewhere, together with rapid subsidence of British power, once paramount in the area. Fresh impetus was thereby given to Zionism, Pan-Arabism and local Arab nationalist movements, all of which played their role and when the destiny of Libya was finally shaped had to be taken into consideration to a degree not customary in the past. At the same time, the recession of British and French power breathed new life into traditional Russian imperialism emboldened now by recent victories and strengthened by the crusading gospel of the Soviets. The foreboding prospect of Soviet domination of the Middle East brought the United States into the forefront of the international struggle, aligning it with Britain and against the Soviet Union for what was, in reality, a major necessity to its national security. The Libyan question was treated and finally solved in such a framework and against such a background.

When in September, 1945, the Foreign Ministers of the four great powers first met in London to lay the groundwork for a peace settlement, faith in their capacity to reconcile their differences faded quickly. So far as Libya was concerned, the positions of the Big Four Powers were as follows: The French view on Libya was influenced not by idealistic concern for the Atlantic Charter but by self-interested determination to settle the question in the way best calculated to insure France's colonial future. Unquestionably the liberation of the Libyan Arabs from Italian rule would have important repercussions on the Arab population of French North Africa. Thus France opposed every kind of collective trusteeship

with a precise commitment in favor of early independence.¹ Moreover France advanced a claim to the Fezzan region which was then occupied by French troops. France was generally in favor of turning Libya back to Italy, either directly or in the form of a trusteeship.

The British attitude toward Libya was less definite than the French, except for specific war-time commitments to the Sanusi of Cyrenaica. It should be added, however, that circumstantial evidence lent weight to a suspicion that Britain was perhaps preparing to play the villain's role. Since the capitulation of Italy in the autumn of 1943, London stood accused in various quarters of employing a heavy hand in the Mediterranean lands in order to satisfy imperial interests. On the other hand the official British stand revealed by Foreign Secretary Bevin in his report of October 9, 1945, to the House of Commons, stated that the British government had instructed him to support the American plan since it "was a wide and far-seeing proposal which would avoid friction between the Great Powers in these areas and give a chance for a great experiment in international co-operation."²

In the United States the State Department was torn between the pro-Italian bloc and the advocates of international administration. The former opposed international administration on the ground that

¹Vernon McKay, "The Future of Italy's Colonies," Foreign Policy Report, Vol. 21, Jan. 1946, pp. 275-276.

²C.L. Gulzberger, "Behind the London Fiasco," New York Times, October 10, 1945.

it would give the Soviet Union a voice in the Mediterranean affairs.¹ Furthermore they indicated that Italy's geographical position in the Mediterranean leads her to play a natural role in that sea, therefore, Libya, which is a Mediterranean country, should be given back to Italy. The advocates of international administration pointed out that giving Libya and other Italian colonies back to Italy would be betraying the spirit of the United Nations Charter. Their arguments influenced Secretary of State Byrnes who at the London Conference proposed international administration not only for Libya but for the other Italian colonies as well. This United States plan envisaged a ten-year international trusteeship for Libya at the end of which this colony would be given its independence.² The big surprise of the London Conference, however, was the public announcement by the U.S.S.R. of its claim for an individual trusteeship in the Italian colonies. Foreign Commissar Molotov, in announcing the demand, asserted that the Soviet Union's experience in dealing with racial and religious problems showed that it was best qualified to administer the disputed colonies.³ The Russians demanded a Soviet trusteeship over Tripolitania. This demand lent confirmation to the growing suspicions that the Soviet Union had designs upon the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. Their claim to Tripolitania seemed, at that time,

¹New York Times, September 2, 1945.

²New York Times, September 23, 1945.

³McKay, op. cit., p. 276.

to be more than a diplomatic gesture made for sheer bargaining purposes, and was met with general disapproval from the Western democracies.

Amidst this confusion over the destiny of the Italian colonies, the Italians themselves did not lose hope for the retention of their lands overseas. This hope was derived from the differences among the Big Four Powers. The Italian Premier, Parri, and his Foreign Minister, de Gasperi, in public statements, and more officially in formal letters of August 22, 1945, to President Truman and Secretary of State Byrnes, asked for Italian sovereignty over Libya and promised to grant strategic bases to the United Nations in that country.¹

Another interested party, the Arab League, demanded the immediate and complete independence of Libya and, if this could not be granted, the second choice was for trusteeship under the Arab League.

The Foreign Ministers of the Big Four Powers who assembled in Paris during April, 1946, prior to the peace conference, found themselves again faced with the deadlock over the Italian colonies. Events had occurred between October, 1945, and April, 1946, to heighten the complexity of the problem. Relations between the Soviet Union and the Western Powers had steadily deteriorated. Differences over Germany, Austria and the Balkan satellites, as well

¹These letters were first made public by Secretary of State Byrnes on November 7, 1945. New York Times, November 8, 1945 and State Department Bulletin, November 11, 1945.

as the Soviet failure to withdraw from Iran aroused widespread apprehension. Partly for these reasons, but also because of Washington's unreadiness to universalize the principle of international trusteeship so as to make it applicable to Pacific islands as well, the State Department displayed little enthusiasm for its former proposal of international trusteeship and appeared to draw closer to the British and French in a search for another compromise. The Soviet Union, in its turn, became less insistent in its demand for Tripolitania, provided Trieste was given to Yugoslavia.

Increasing local pressures, and the withdrawal of the Soviet Union and the United States from their original ground, encouraged British Foreign Secretary Bevin to seize the initiative with a British proposal on April 29, 1946, in which he suggested that Libya should be accorded immediate independence. The United States was at least not unfavorable, but France received the plan coldly and the Soviet Union was positively against it. The proposition that Libya receive immediate independence, said Molotov (and not without some measure of truth) "was conceived with the purpose of ensuring British domination."¹ The Soviet Foreign Minister therefore advanced a new plan of his own, the establishment of four individual trusteeships, with one of the Big Four in each case assuming primary responsibility, aided by an Italian assistant and an advisory council composed of two natives and representatives of three of the big

¹George Hains, "The Problem of the Italian Colonies," Middle East Journal, Vol. 1, 1947, p. 425.

powers. Tripolitania, of course, was to be a Soviet ward. This proposal partially met the views of the French and the Italians, as well as the earlier views of the Americans. To a certain extent, it also met the British view, for Cyrenaica was to be awarded to Britain. But in the light of intervening events and the growing belief that Mr. Molotov either did not mean seriously what he proposed or had dangerous hidden intentions, this new proposition was not considered by the Western Powers.

A few weeks later Mr. Molotov, lined up with the French, agreed to sole Italian trusteeship over Libya. Secretary of State Byrnes agreed to go along provided guarantees of independence for Libya within ten years were included, and provided Cyrenaica was assured a special autonomy, giving it direct access to the United Nations. Again this proposal was unacceptable to the British and the French. Every expedient having failed, Secretary of State Byrnes at length suggested that Italy be required simply to renounce sovereignty over the colonies, leaving their disposition to the Council of Foreign Ministers for future consideration. This principle was accepted and was passed along to the Paris Peace Conference, where it was approved on September 25, 1946.¹

¹Article 23 of the Paris treaty reads as follows:

1. Italy renounces all rights and title to the Italian possessions in Africa, i.e. Libya, Eritrea, and Italian Somaliland.
2. Pending their final disposal, the said possessions shall continue under their present administration.

3. The final disposal of these possessions shall be determined jointly by the governments of the Soviet Union, of the United Kingdom, of the United States of America, and of France within one year from the coming into force of the present treaty, in the manner laid down in the joint declaration of February 10, 1947, issued by the said governments, which is reproduced in Annex XI.

(Benjamin Rivlin, The United Nations and the Italian Colonies, New York, 1950, pp. 14-15)

Implementation of the colonial provisions of the Italian peace treaty got under way shortly after the treaty came into force on September 15, 1947. This task was largely delegated to the deputies of the Council of Foreign Ministers, who began their meetings on October 3, 1947. They were entrusted with a threefold task;

(1) dispatching a commission of investigation to the colonies, (2) consulting with the other interested governments, and (3) eventually making recommendations to the Council of Foreign Ministers as to the disposition of the colonies. But the deputies' deliberations were marked by constant bickering and wrangling.

After considering the matter for ten months, during which time they dispatched the commission of investigation and heard the views of other interested governments, the deputies submitted their recommendations to the Council of Foreign Ministers. Their recommendations regarding Libya were as follows: the Soviet Union recommended that it be placed under the trusteeship of Italy for a definite and acceptable term; France recommended the postponement of a decision for one year; the United States and the United Kingdom proposed the postponement of a decision for one year for Tripolitania and the Fezzan, with Cyrenaica to be placed under British trusteeship immediately. On September 13, 1948, representatives of the Four Powers met in Paris in a final effort to deal with the matter. The Soviet Union again proposed a plan for collective trusteeship identical with the one originally submitted by the United States at the first session of the Council of Foreign Ministers in September, 1945. The resurrection of the collective trusteeship plan

met with a cold reception. France and Britain categorically rejected it. Even the United States rejected it, since, in view of the increasingly strained relations between East and West, it no longer adequately provided for essential strategic and security interests.¹

The Role of the United Nations

With the failure of the Big Four to agree on a solution for the Italian colonies by September 15, 1948, the question was referred to the United Nations General Assembly in compliance with Article 23 of the Treaty of Paris.

The third regular session of the Assembly opened in Paris on September 21, 1948, and this item was immediately added to its agenda.

To many delegations this was a new question which they were unprepared to handle. Furthermore, the lack of agreement even among the three western members of the Big Four made the hope of finding any solution which could command a two-thirds majority in the Assembly extremely problematical. Nothing had been done about the question when the General Assembly reconvened in New York four months later.

Before opening the general debate on the question, Committee I approved a resolution inviting the government of Italy and the native

¹New York Times and New York Herald Tribune, September 15, 1948.

population to send representatives to participate, without vote, in the committee discussions.¹ Committee I established an eleven-nation sub-committee to screen requests of political parties or organizations in the former Italian colonies for a hearing before the full committee.² This sub-committee chose the following parties and organizations to represent Libya: the National Congress of Cyrenaica, the National Council for the Liberation of Libya, the National Association of Refugees from Libya, the Association of Libyan Ex-Servicemen, and the Jewish Community of Tripolitania. These organizations made oral and written representations to Committee I.

Throughout the general debate in the committee, the prevailing idea was that of the United States delegate, who, in opening the debate, declared that since the territories in question were non-self-governing it was incumbent upon the Assembly to reach a solution which applied the two basic principles of Chapter XI of the United Nations Charter, namely: (1) that the interests of the inhabitants of those territories were paramount, and (2) that international peace and security must be furthered.³ However, the conclusions suggested by the various delegations in the application of these two principles were sharply divergent. The principal areas of disagreement were:

1. The type of trusteeship. Suggestions ranged from direct United Nations administration to a joint trusteeship by a group of

¹United Nations Docs. A/C.1/431 and A/C.1/SR.238.

²United Nations Docs. A/C.1/SR.242.

³United Nations Docs. A/C.1/SR.238.

countries or to administration by a single country.

2. The role to be assigned to Italy. At one extreme were the Latin American states who favored Italian trusteeship for all the colonies and, at the other, the Arab states and also, although without vote, the representatives of the native populations.

3. The special problem of Eritrea. This included the question of territorial concessions to Ethiopia.

At the conclusion of the general debate, during which more than forty states presented as many divergent views, it was fairly obvious that mastering the required two-thirds majority in the General Assembly would be most difficult. The compelling conclusion from the general debate was that one large bloc or combination of lesser blocs could prevent any agreement from being reached. Strenuous efforts were made to obtain a winning combination through behind-the-scenes negotiations, of which the most promising were those undertaken between the Latin American states and the combined Arab and Asiatic states which together could ensure a two-thirds majority. But even these failed to produce any result.

Bevin-Sforza Plan

While the committee was considering a number of resolutions, unexpected news came from London that British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin and Italian Foreign Minister Count Carlo Sforza had come to an agreement on a formula for the disposition of the

colonies.¹ The agreement was reached when Count Sforza stopped off at London on his way back to Italy from Lake Success. Essentially, the Bevin-Sforza agreement modified the proposal presented earlier to Committee I by the British in a manner acceptable to the large pro-Italian bloc in the Assembly. The crux of the compromise lay in the plan for Libya. This called for: (1) a statement of principle to the effect that Libya would become independent at the end of ten years, if the General Assembly decided that this step was appropriate; (2) British trusteeship for Cyrenaica; (3) French trusteeship over the Fezzan; and (4) Italian trusteeship over Tripolitania in 1951, the territory remaining in the interim under British rule.

Immediately upon convening, Sub-committee 15 turned to a consideration of the Bevin-Sforza plan, which seemed to have the decided advantage of being the only one that could possibly muster the necessary two-thirds vote. Although it was bitterly attacked by the Arab, Asiatic and Soviet States, it received the support of the Latin American States and Great Britain, the United States and France. It was not surprising, then, that a resolution following the formula of the Bevin-Sforza agreement was eventually approved by the sub-committee. As adopted, the resolution recommended;

1. That Libya be granted independence ten years from the date of the adoption of this resolution, provided the General Assembly then decided that this step was appropriate.

¹New York Times, May 10, 1949.

(a) That Cyrenaica be placed under the international trusteeship system, with the United Kingdom as the administering authority, without prejudice to its incorporation in a united Libya.

(b) That the Fezzan be placed under the international trusteeship system, with France as the administering authority, also without prejudice to its incorporation in a united Libya.

(c) That Tripolitania be placed under the international trusteeship system, by the end of 1951, with Italy as administering authority, also without prejudice to its incorporation in a united Libya.

During the interim period, the present British temporary administration should continue, with the assistance of an advisory council consisting of representatives of Egypt, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, the United States and a representative of the people of the territory. The advisory council should determine its scope and duties in consultation with the administering authority. That the powers charged with the administration of the three territories take all necessary measures to promote the co-ordination of their activities in order that nothing be done to prejudice the attainment of an independent Libyan state, the Trusteeship Council to be responsible for supervising the execution of this provision.

2. That former Italian Somaliland be placed under the international trusteeship system, with Italy as administering authority.

3. That Eritrea, except for the western province, be incorporated into Ethiopia, under certain terms and conditions, to include the provision of appropriate guarantees for the protection of the

minorities and, without prejudice to the sovereignty of Ethiopia, appropriate municipal charters for the cities of Asmara and Massawa, and that the western province be incorporated in the adjacent Sudan.¹

The key section of the resolution, dealing with Libya, was adopted by a vote of eight to five with three abstentions.²

In the full committee, the sub-committee resolution gave rise to prolonged and bitter debate. Not only was the method by which the compromise was achieved attacked as presenting the General Assembly with a fait accompli in the form of an agreement reached outside the United Nations while the General Assembly itself was considering the problem, but every section of the resolution was subjected to scathing criticism. The resolution was also attacked as not taking into account the wishes of the native inhabitants.³

Before Committee I voted on the sub-committee resolutions, a Norwegian amendment making independence for Libya automatic at the end of ten years, unless the Assembly decided the contrary, was accepted.

With the strong backing of the United States, Great Britain, France and the Latin American states, the resolution as amended was accepted by Committee I. The vote was 34 to 16 with seven abstentions.

¹United Nations Doc. A/C.1/466

²United Nations Doc. A/C.1/466

³United Nations Doc. A/C.1/SR.271, p.3-5.

When the question came before the General Assembly in plenary session, it was denounced by the Soviet Union, supported by the East European, Arab and Asiatic States, on the ground that the resolution failed to reflect the views and the real interests of the peoples of the colonies themselves. The Deputy Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union described the disposal of the colonies as "steeped in a spirit of hegemony and domination" on the part of the United Kingdom and the United States and declared that it was a "deal to meet the appetites of the ruling circles" of these states.¹

The United States, Great Britain and the Latin American states claimed, however, that, since it was not possible to find a solution that would completely reconcile all the various suggestions, this proposal was the best that could be expected under the circumstances.²

In the paragraph voting on the resolution, two key provisions, those dealing with Tripolitania and Italian Somaliland, failed to receive the necessary two-thirds majority. A vote of 33 in favor of Italian trusteeship over Tripolitania, with 17 against and eight absentions, fell one vote short of the two-thirds majority. With the deletion of these two paragraphs, all that was left was a resolution providing for British trusteeship over Cyrenaica, French trusteeship over the Fezzan and the incorporation of part of Eritrea into Ethiopia. Shorn of the pro-Italian provisions, the resolution

¹United Nations Docs. A/PV 217 and A/PV 218.

²United Nations Docs. A/PV 217 and A/PV 218.

was unacceptable to the Latin American states. When the resolution came up for the final vote, it was overwhelmingly defeated. It received only 14 favorable votes with 37 against and seven abstentions.¹ As the defeat of the compromise resolution came five days after the date originally set for the Assembly's adjournment, the delegates were left with no alternative but to postpone a final decision until the fourth session, which they did by an overwhelming vote.²

The Final Solution

The inter-session period saw several new developments in the Libyan question. On June 1, just two weeks after the adjournment of the third session, the British government, in view of the absence of any positive result from the recent deliberations at Lake Success, announced its intention of granting the people of Cyrenaica limited self-government. This announcement of policy came in a statement by the British Chief Administrator in Cyrenaica, before a plenary meeting of the Assembly of the National Congress of Cyrenaica. The declaration was as follows:

A) That they (the British government) recognize the Emir,³ who is the freely chosen leader of his people, as the head of the Cyrenaican government.

¹United Nations Doc. A/PV 218.

²United Nations Doc. A/PV 219.

³Emir Muhammed Idris el Sanusi.

B) That they formally recognize the desire of the Cyrenaicans for self-government and will take all steps compatible with their international obligations to promote it.

C) That they agree to the formation of a Cyrenaican government with responsibility over internal affairs and that they invite the Emir to visit London for discussions on this matter.¹

During the summer, the Emir visited London and entered into discussions with the Foreign Office that culminated on September 17th in the formal proclamation of Cyrenaican self-government as far as internal affairs were concerned. The proclamation empowered the Emir to enact a constitution, and define its limits and the powers reserved to the British Chief Administrator, who was to be known hereafter as the British Resident. The Emir and his Council of Ministers were granted legislative powers over all internal affairs, including civil and criminal law, religious affairs, public order, education, civil service, elections, customs, public revenue and expenditure, communications, trade and industry. Provision was made for the appointment of British legal and financial advisers, who were given extensive supervisory and review powers over the actions of the Cyrenaican government. Britain furthermore retained control over external affairs, foreign trade, air navigation, defense, and reserved the right to revoke, alter or amend the

¹New York Times, May 27, 1949.

proclamation.¹

Although the British government declared that in taking these steps they wished to emphasize that nothing would be done to prejudice the eventual future of Libya as a whole, the action could hardly fail to affect the efforts to find a final solution for Libya.

At the beginning of the fourth session of the United Nations Assembly, there was wider agreement as to the broad principles of an acceptable compromise than there had been at the opening of the second part of the third session.

As at the previous session, the question was assigned to the agenda of Committee I, which again invited Italy to take part in committee discussions. A sub-committee was also established to screen the requests from political parties and organizations in the territories for the hearings before Committee I.

In the committee's general debate, the viewpoints expressed by many of the delegations revealed a number of significant changes from the positions taken at the third session. It was now the duty of Sub-committee 17 to study the six resolutions that were presented to the committee and to draft an acceptable one.²

Finally a resolution was drafted, voted by Committee I and submitted to the General Assembly. The wide acceptance of the resolution was reflected in the Assembly's plenary session debate.³

¹Manchester Guardian, September 17, 1949.

²United Nations Doc. A/C.1/497.

³United Nations Doc. A/1089.

A majority of delegates acclaimed the resolution as the most feasible and practicable solution under the circumstances. Finally, on November 21, 1949, the General Assembly, after section by section approval, overwhelmingly accepted the draft resolution by a vote of 48 to one with nine abstentions.

The resolution was as follows:

"The General Assembly, in accordance with Annex XI, Paragraph 3, of the treaty of peace with Italy, 1947, whereby the powers concerned have agreed to accept the recommendation of the General Assembly on the disposal of the former Italian colonies and to take appropriate measures for giving effect to it. Having taken note of the report of the Four Power Commission of Investigation, having heard spokesmen of organizations representing substantial sections of opinion in the territories concerned, and having taken into consideration the wishes and welfare of the inhabitants of the territories, the interests of peace and security, the views of the interested governments and the relevant provisions of the charter.

"With respect to Libya recommends:

1. That Libya, comprising Cyrenaica, Tripolitania and the Fezzan, shall be constituted an independent and sovereign state;
2. That this independence shall become effective as soon as possible and in any case not later than January 1, 1952;
3. That a constitution for Libya, including the form of the government, shall be determined by representatives of the inhabitants of Cyrenaica, Tripolitania and the Fezzan, meeting and consulting together in a National Assembly;

4. That for the purpose of assisting the people of Libya in the formulation of the constitution and the establishment of an independent government, there shall be a United Nations Commissioner in Libya, appointed by the General Assembly and a Council to aid and advise him;
5. That the United Nations Commissioner, in consultation with the Council, shall submit to the Secretary-General an annual report and such other special reports as he may consider necessary. To these reports shall be added any memorandum or document that the United Nations Commissioner or a member of the Council may wish to bring to the attention of the United Nations;
6. That the Council shall consist of ten members, namely:
 - (a) one representative nominated by the government of each of the following countries: Egypt, France, Italy, Pakistan and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America;
 - (b) one representative of the people of each of the three regions of Libya and one representative of the minorities of Libya;
7. That the United Nations shall appoint the representatives mentioned in Paragraph 6 (b), after consultation with the administering powers, the representatives of the governments mentioned in Paragraph 6 (a), leading personalities and representatives of political parties and organizations in the territories concerned;
8. That, in the discharge of his function, the United Nations Commissioner shall consult and be guided by the advice of the members

of his Council, it being understood that he may call upon different members to advise him in respect to different regions or different subjects;

9. That the United Nations Commissioner may offer suggestions to the General Assembly, to the Economic and Social Council and to the Secretary-General as to the measures that the United Nations might adopt during the transitional period regarding the economic and social problems of Libya;

10. That the administering powers in co-operation with the United Nations Commissioner:

(a) Initiate immediately all necessary steps for the transfer of power to a duly constituted independent government;

(b) Administer the territories for the purpose of assisting in the establishment of Libyan unity and independence, co-operate in the formation of governmental institutions and co-ordinate their activities to this end;

(c) Make an annual report to the General Assembly on the steps taken to implement these recommendations;

11. That upon its establishment as an independent state, Libya shall be admitted to the United Nations in accordance with Article 4 of the Charter."¹

¹United Nations Doc. A/1124, November, 1949.

PART II

GEOGRAPHICAL FOUNDATIONS

CHAPTER IV

PHYSICAL FOUNDATIONS

Geographical Location

Since Libya is a Mediterranean country, the importance of her geographical location can only be fully understood within the complex system of the Mediterranean Sea and the Middle East. [It is not my intention to discuss here in detail the strategic and economic importance of the area, or the interests and policies of the Great Powers in this part of the world, for this will be treated in the next chapter.] However, a brief summary of the importance of the Mediterranean Sea will suffice here to show the importance of the location of Libya.

The Mediterranean and the Middle East together constitute a transit zone of the greatest strategic importance. What happens within this region has a direct bearing on the security of several great powers. "In politics" writes one authority on the Mediterranean, "its significance has been that of a passage, or a megaphone, or a knuckleduster. It has always been a route to somewhere, or the string which, when pulled, reveals that its other end is in India, Vladivostok, the Middle Danube, or Mosul. You cannot write on it without also writing on imperial policy, Arab and Moslem policy, European policy. You cannot write on it without considering the policy of five or six Great Powers, and as many satellites, all of whom, when the

storm threatens, react differently."¹

The Mediterranean and the Middle East, in short, have been and in the future will continue to be an arena of Great Power politics. Therefore the geographical location of Libya should be considered in the light of these facts. Libya extends eastwards along the Mediterranean coast of Africa from Ras Ajir (Cape Agedir) on the Tunisian border to the Gulf of el Sallum on the Egyptian frontier and from the Mediterranean in the north to the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and French Equatorial Africa on the south. Its astronomical location is limited in the west by 11°30' East and in the east by 25° East; along its Mediterranean coast latitude 33°30' North passes through the northernmost tip, while in the south the boundaries reach 19° and 22° North in the southeast and southwest corners respectively.

Libya's frontage of 1400 miles on the southern shore of the Mediterranean gives its location a particular importance from both the economic and the strategic points of view, since she has a large and relatively flat area suitable for the building of air bases coupled with a clear, congenial Mediterranean climate, which gives her an unrivaled suitability for aviation development.

Its nearness to Europe, the Suez Canal and the Middle East provides the country with air bases from which almost every corner of Europe could be reached. Its long coast, though ill-provided with natural harbors, offers some good naval stations. Tripoli, the

¹Elizabeth Monroe, The Mediterranean in Politics, New York, 1938, p. 1.

chief port and capital of Libya, is an aero-naval station of some importance in the central part of the Mediterranean, lying less than 300 miles from Sicily. Farther east Tobruk occupies a naturally strong position at the head of a deep, well-protected and commodious bay and is only 200 miles from Crete and 250 miles from the Greek mainland. This provides another aero-naval base for controlling the eastern basin of the Mediterranean. In short, a strong air and naval power based on Libya could control the central part of the Mediterranean, menace navigation and threaten southern and central Europe. Moreover Libya's vicinal location gives her an advantage in maintaining contact with the Middle East through Egypt and with the western basin of the Mediterranean through Tunisia. Meanwhile the extension of her territory, particularly her southeastern corner, into the heart of Africa has important strategic value, in view of the struggle for colonies, for an easy penetration into Equatorial Africa.

Although this long coast of Libya, by its physical make-up, is not conducive to great maritime activity, since as it lacks both the numerous deep indentations which provide deep and sheltered harbors, and a productive hinterland it has, nevertheless, always induced some maritime activity. During the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth and even the first half of the nineteenth centuries this coast was notorious for its piracy. By stimulating the economic life of the country, this long coast could be converted into a great asset for the new state of Libya; it could afford some good harbors to link Libya with the outside world and provide avenues for economic

and cultural advantages as well as for considerable maritime purposes.

Size

Size is another element to be considered in the geographical evaluation of political units. It is a very important factor, since without sufficient size no nation can aspire to reach the rank of a big power.

With an area of 679,358 square miles, Libya is two and one half times the size of Texas, or larger than Germany, France and Spain combined. However, this impressive size means little and considered alone leads to an erroneous conclusion, for the largest part of the country is unproductive desert; only a small fragment of its area is suitable for human occupancy. The effective territory is a small fraction of the national territory, and could support only a little more than the present population.

Shape

Compact shape is an advantage to a state. The more compact the state, the shorter is the boundary length in relation to the area - hence the relative vulnerability is reduced.

The territory of Libya is represented by an irregular quadrilateral with its shortest side to the west and the longest to the east. The southern side falls obliquely in a southeastern direction deep into the interior of Africa, the most southerly point being

found at 18°45' North.¹ This shape is remarkably compact. A circle with a 480 miles radius described from the geographic center of the country encloses nearly all of Libya. (Figure 3). The sectors without the circle, when totaled, amount to but a small part of the country's area. However, the desert conditions have tremendously reduced the advantage of the area's compactness. The vast and desolate Sirte, which stretches for 400 miles along the Gulf of Sirte, separates Cyrenaica from Tripolitania; the desert of Hamadet el Hamra to the south of Tripolitania and the Libyan desert to the south of Cyrenaica separate both provinces from Fezzan and from the other oases scattered through the desert. Thus the physical factors of aridity and desertic atmosphere have nullified the continuity of the effective area and created several isolated units separated from each other by vast and empty desert. Today, new innovations and developments in transportation have facilitated the linking of these isolated units and reduced to a great extent the disadvantages of natural conditions.

The location of the capital of a state is of great significance. From the standpoint of protection a central location is the ideal.

Tripoli, the capital of Libya, is very close to the western frontier and hence is vulnerable to any attack from this direction. Its location on the Mediterranean coast is an indication of its maritime past, when old Phoenician Oea (the present Tripoli) was a

¹Hugo Grothe, Libyen und die Italienischen Kraftfelder in Nordafrika, Berlin, 1941, p. 22.

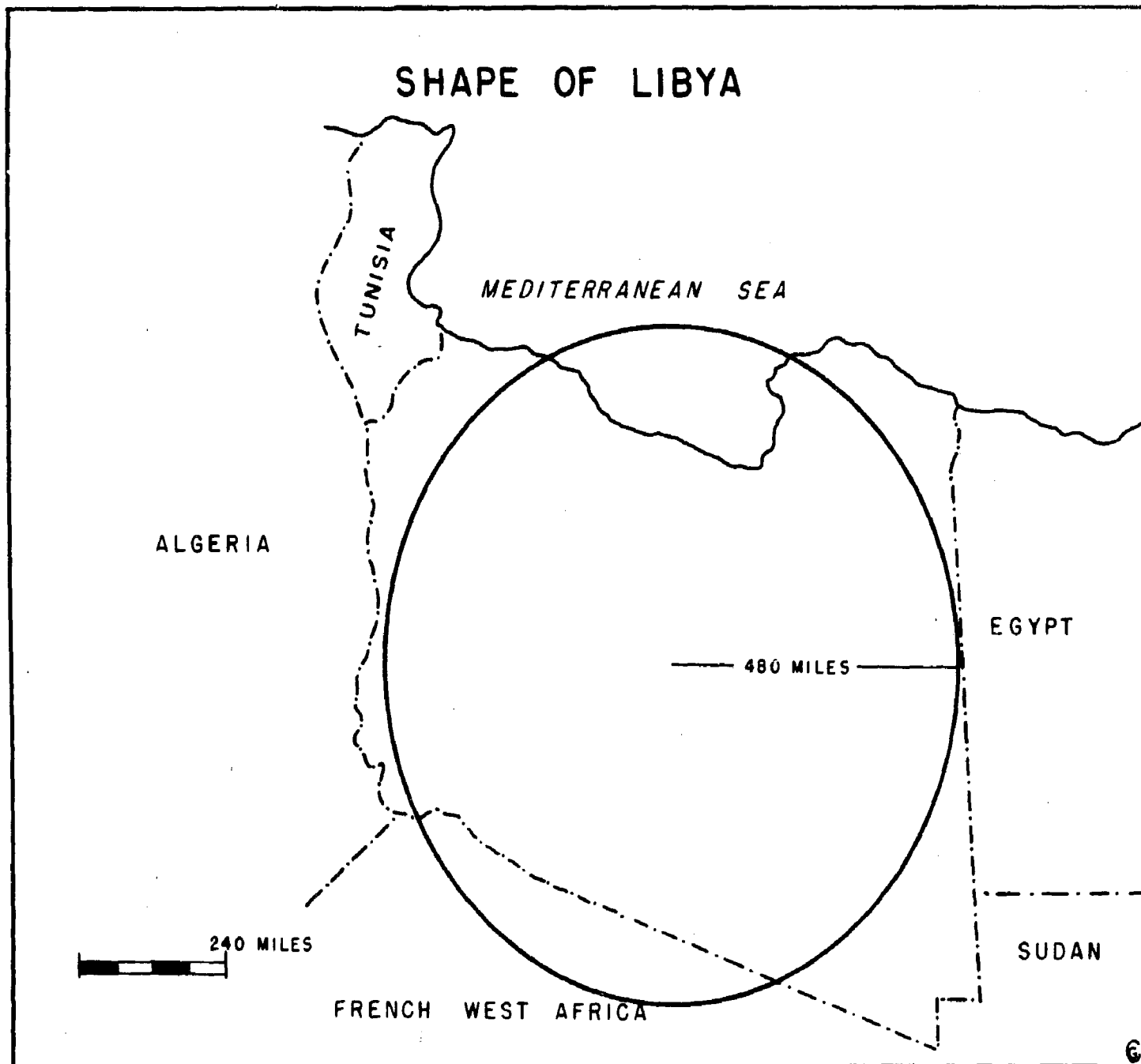


FIG. 3

leading commercial port on this coast. Since Libya has decided to form a Federal State, it was thought, wisely, in order to reduce the rivalry and to eliminate the friction between its two major provinces, to have two capitals. Therefore, Bengazi has been chosen as the second capital. The location of Bengazi, far away from the eastern frontier, and with routes to the interior gives it an advantage over Tripoli, whereas its sea location shares with Tripoli the advantage of being a seaport and reflects its maritime past in the Hellenic period.

Climate

Climate is one of the most important factors in man's life. It not only determines the kind of crops he can raise and the mode of life he may assume, but it has great influence on his vitality and thus enters into the fabric of his cultural attainments.

In a political-geographical study the two important climatic elements, temperature and humidity, which have the greatest influence on human life and on the distribution of mankind, should be considered.

Variety of climatic detail exerts a strong influence upon the people and the structure of the state, for the need of any nation to cope with climate in its efforts to establish a sound economic balance makes climatic details of utmost importance.

Tripolitania

Northern Tripolitania and Cyrenaica are the vestibules of the Sahara. They lie between 32° and 33° North latitude, however, they enjoy a Mediterranean climate. From October to April or May they are under the influence of the barometric pressures of Atlantic origin, attracted by the warm mass of the Mediterranean. In summer the so-called Azores anticyclone invades the Mediterranean region, and in North Libya as elsewhere the barometric pressure is high, the weather calm, dry and warm; however the heat on the coasts is tempered by the sea breeze.

Tripolitania has, due to its particular position, original climatic characteristics. In comparison with French North Africa its situation is very southern. The barometric depressions found in the cold season over the Gulf of Lyons or the Tyrrhenian Sea frequently have no effect on Tripolitania or are only capable of attracting dry winds from the Sahara. However, those depressions that pass near the shores of Sicily or Malta are able to disturb the weather of Tripolitania and sometimes bring rains. But these depressions, whose importance is generally secondary, pass quickly and are often weak. Therefore rain is very rare and the weather is usually fine.¹

The dryness of the country is largely caused by the position of Tunisia. In French Maghreb, the rain bearing winds are mainly

¹Jean Despois, da Colonisation Italienne en Libye, Paris, 1935, pp. 6-7.

from the northwest; Tunis then acts like a screen between the moist western basin of the Mediterranean and the dry southern side of the Gulf of Gabes. In other words, Tripolitania lies in the rain shadow of Tunisia.

The dryness is increased by the often torrid heat of the Sahara to the south and east. Proximity to the Sahara, rather than latitude gives Tripolitania temperatures that are often extreme. (Figure 4). The ghibli, an equivalent of the sirocco, blows from the desert and as it descends from the Jebel onto the plain of Jeffara, it acquires the characteristics of the burning foehn, scorches the whole plain and makes the thermometer rise yearly to 122° F. Exceptionally high temperatures, excessive dryness and velocities of 40 to 50 M.P.H. characterize the ghibli, and make it an important factor in agricultural production.

Finally, from the dual contact with the Mediterranean and the Sahara - the one, a mass of water which moderates temperatures, brings humidity and rain, the other, a large, very dry continental surface with great ranges in temperature, both acting in directions contrary to the distribution of pressure - there results marked instability of climate with sharp changes in weather.

Dryness, excessive heat in summer, instability of weather, these are the essential characteristics of the northern Tripolitanian climate.

The following table presents a resume of the principal data

¹Despois, op. cit., p. 7.

CLIMATIC CHART

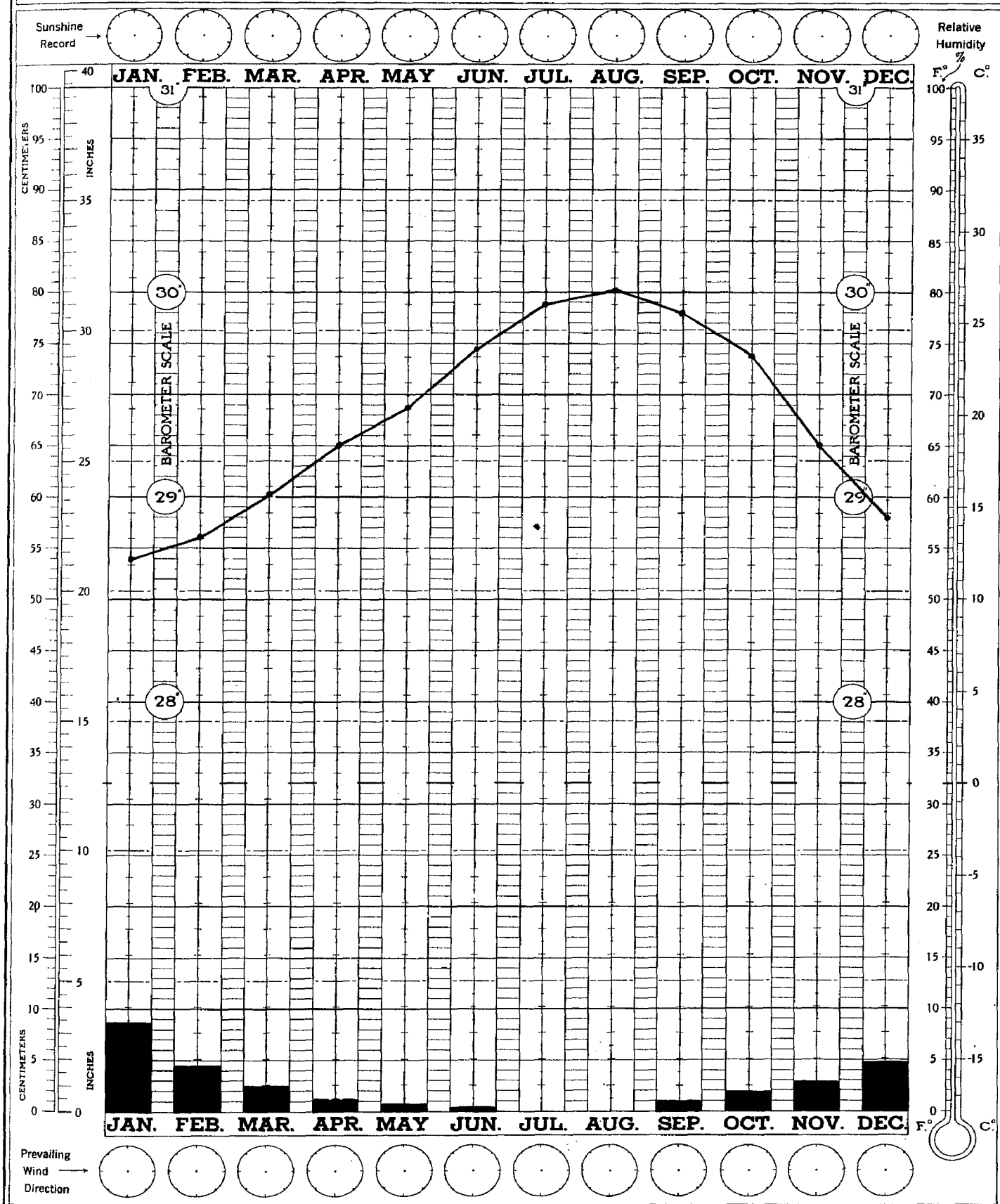
103
No. 80

STATION TRIPOLI

Latitude 32.57N Longitude 13.12E Elevation 56 F.T.

Average Annual Rainfall 16.3 IN. Average Annual Temperature 66.2° Period of Record.....

Source W.G. Kendrew, The Climate of the Continents



concerning temperatures and humidity of characteristic stations.

TRIPOLITANIA

Station	Altitude	Mean temperature			Mean humidity	
		Monthly maximum	Monthly minimum	Annual	Summer	Winter
Tripoli	50 ft	83.5 (Aug)	53.9 (Jan)	67.6	69	66
Azizia	400 ft	86.2 (July)	52.5 (—)	70.5	40	62
Gharian	2400 ft	81.1 (July)	45.1 (—)	64.8	32	71
Mizda	1730 ft	83.8 (July)	50.5	67.6	32	51

The influence of the sea on the coastal zone is shown by the table above;¹ the sea tempers the heat of summer, and produces sufficient humidity so that the hottest month is August and not July. But this influence does not extend beyond a few miles inland. Azizia, situated less than 23 miles from the coast has a climate that is purely continental, colder in winter and, especially, much warmer in summer than that of Tripoli: its summer temperatures are absolutely Saharan when a strong ghibli blows from the south and descends from the Jebel: 127° and 131° are sometimes reached and a temperature of 136° has been recorded.²

¹Ibid., p. 7.

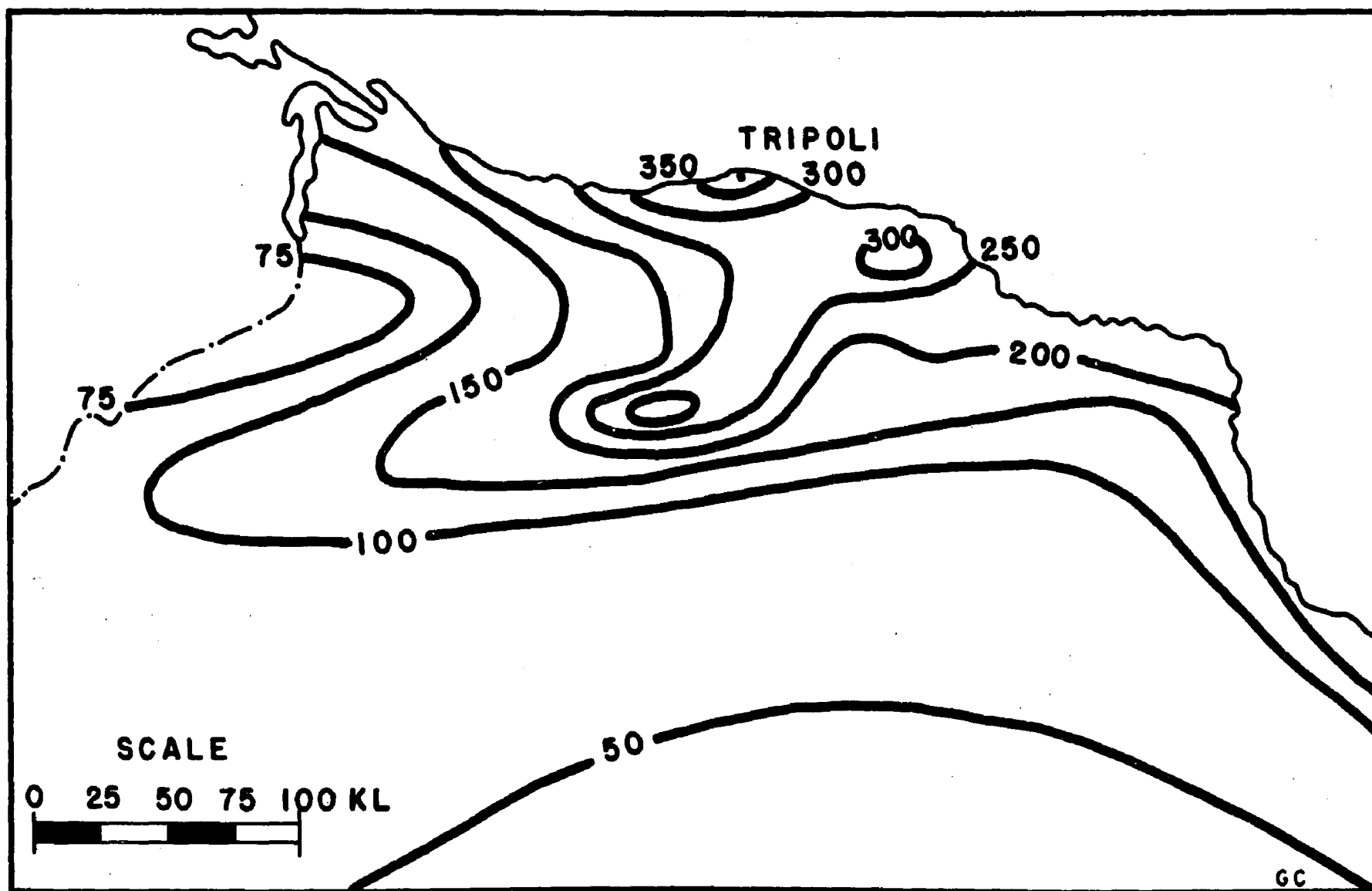
²W. C. Kendrew, The Climate of the Continents, London, 1941, p. 29.

The altitude lowers the temperatures, especially in winter; days of frost are not rare on the Jebel. In summer the thermometer rises higher during the day than on the coast, although the sea breeze can be felt there at times; but the drier nights are cooler. Humidity is high only in winter; fogs are fairly frequent and sometimes clouds driven by the winds from the north hide the top of the escarpment.

The coast and the Jebel are therefore relatively favored by temperatures and humidity. They are even more favored by rain. The chart of rainfall distribution (Figure 5) underlines an essential fact: how small a part of northern Tripolitania can be cultivated. Less than half of the country has a mean yearly rain of over 200 mm., a figure which can be used to limit the zones where dry farming is possible. Only the region of Tripoli and a small part of the central and eastern Jebel receive more than 300 mm. of rain. All the western Jeffara is below 200 and the Tunisian borders do not even receive 75 mm. The 100 mm. isohyet passes south of the Jebel and limits the extent of the desert to the north.¹

The chart gives no idea of the extraordinary irregularity of the rains, nor of their torrential nature. Only the area around Tripoli and the eastern half of the Jebel have more than 40 days of rain per year. The cultivable part of the Jeffara may have from 30 to 40 rain days, sometimes only 25 to 30; and the figures fall below 20 in the western Jeffara and to the south of the Jebel.

¹Despois, op. cit., p. 8.



RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION (Mm) IN TRIPOLITANIA
FIG. 5

Moreover, these too rare days of rain are very often poorly distributed; theoretically the rainy season stretches from October to April; in actual fact it often lasts a much shorter time and the rains of the autumn or the spring may be almost entirely lacking. Precipitation often falls in short, violent storms, sometimes surpassing 75 mm. per day. But the autumn rains are indispensable for the preparation of the soil and for the sowing, whereas those of spring are necessary for the development of cereals and earing. In fact from year to year the rainfall is very variable, especially in the interior: Azizia, for example, received 274 mm. in 82 days in 1929, but only had 127.8 in 31 days in 1927; Gharian had 488.6 mm. in 71 days in 1929 and only 193.2 in 28 days in 1927.¹

Moreover the region may also suffer from a cyclical irregularity of precipitation, being subjected, as are dry areas generally, to successive fluctuations of precipitation: a period of abnormally dry years followed by a wetter period of equal duration. This long range type of irregularity in rainfall may obviously accentuate an already critical situation, or on the other hand, it may bring a period of wetter years in which agricultural conditions would be much superior to the normal. The effects of this dual variability upon the economy of the country should be readily evident.²

¹Ibid., p. 10.

²For further information on this subject see the following references:
 C. E. P. Brooks, Climate Through the Ages, London, 1949.
 Ellsworth Huntington, Civilization and Climate, New Haven, 1919.
 Walter Clay Lowdermilk, Palestine Land of Promise, New York, 1944.
 Ellen Churchill Semple, The Geography of the Mediterranean Region, New York, 1931.

Thus dry farming is difficult in Tripolitania; it is futile to depend on this monthly and annual irregularity of rainfall which often endangers the harvests or destroys them completely. The ghibli is dangerous; its only use is to destroy parasites and cryptogames, but it causes excessive evaporation; its precocity is very bad for the reproductive organs of the plants. On the other hand, the long dry summers prevent the cultivation of a number of temperate crops and all tropical crops; the excess of heat and the strength of the sun's rays in summer cause plants to grow too fast and flourish too early. Finally, the sharp changes in temperature endanger many crops. There is rapid passage from winter to summer, almost without any springtime, but not without some cruel return of cold winds.

Cyrenaica

Thanks to its plateau relief, and to its peninsular form between the deep gulf of the Great Sirte and the Gulf of Bomba, Northern Cyrenaica has a more favorable climate than that of Tripolitania; the influence of the sea and altitude lower its summer temperatures and give it a relatively high rainfall.

The system of winds is also different from that of Tripolitania. Cyrenaica evidently shares with all Mediterranean countries the influence of the summer high pressure: the weather is then hot and

calm; the heat is relieved by the sea breeze and the etesian winds which blow often from the northeast. But in winter the influence of the depressions which cross the Mediterranean is weak. Most of those which cross Italy or Sicily end either at the base of the Great Sirte or pass too far north toward the direction of the Black Sea. Depressions which move toward the Aegean Sea or towards the base of the eastern Mediterranean, and which alone bring rain to Cyrenaica, are infrequent and hence such rain is rare. The shape and relief of Cyrenaica thus saves the area from being semi-arid.

The readings of temperatures and precipitation of the principal stations are as follows:

CYRENAICA

Station	Altitude	Mean temperature			Mean humidity	
		Monthly maximum	Monthly minimum	Annual	Summer	Winter
Bengazi	33 ft	79.3 (Aug)	56.3 (Jan)	68.9	60	63
Saluk	200 ft	80.4 (July)	52.9 =	68.2	39	70
Barke (el Merj)	970 ft	75.2 (Aug)	51.3 =	64.2	45	73
Cyrene	2083 ft	72.3 (July)	47.3 =	60.44	52	79

The summary table shows the following: 1) the influence of the sea, considerably stronger and more general in Cyrenaica than in Tripolitania; 2) the summer temperatures that are not very high, the

ranges that are smaller; 3) humidity that is a little higher; and 4) the hot month at Bengazi and even at Barka to be August and not July. (Figure 6) The moderate temperatures of the summer months are due especially to the almost complete absence of the ghibli (here again is a consequence of shape of the country). The ghibli blows over the Great Sirte, sometimes also over the Plain of Solouk-Bengazi, but it almost completely avoids the plateau. The influence of relief is no less evident than that of the sea. The summer is temperate at Barka and especially at Cyrene, which is touched almost daily by the light winds which come from the sea; on the contrary the winter is cold, and snow sometimes covers the high part of the plateaux. Winds are very violent and icy. Often also the sea winds arrive laden with humidity and clouds cover the Jebel.

The peninsular character and relief of Cyrenaica account largely for its relatively abundant rainfall. The plateau which rises in a series of terraces above the coastal plain receives in the northwest and in the north more than 300 mm. per year; Barka (el Merj) and the whole Jebel Akhdar more than 400 mm., and the region of Cyrene as much as 500 to 600 mm. per year. On the contrary the coastal plain of the west is not very rainy and that confirms the fact that most of the rains of Cyrenaica are orographic rains; south of Bengazi the plain receives less than 200 mm. per year. To the south of the Jebel Akhdar the rainfall diminishes very quickly and the isohyet of 200 mm. and 100 mm. are soon reached.¹ (Figure 7)

¹Despois, op. cit., p. 23.

CLIMATIC CHART

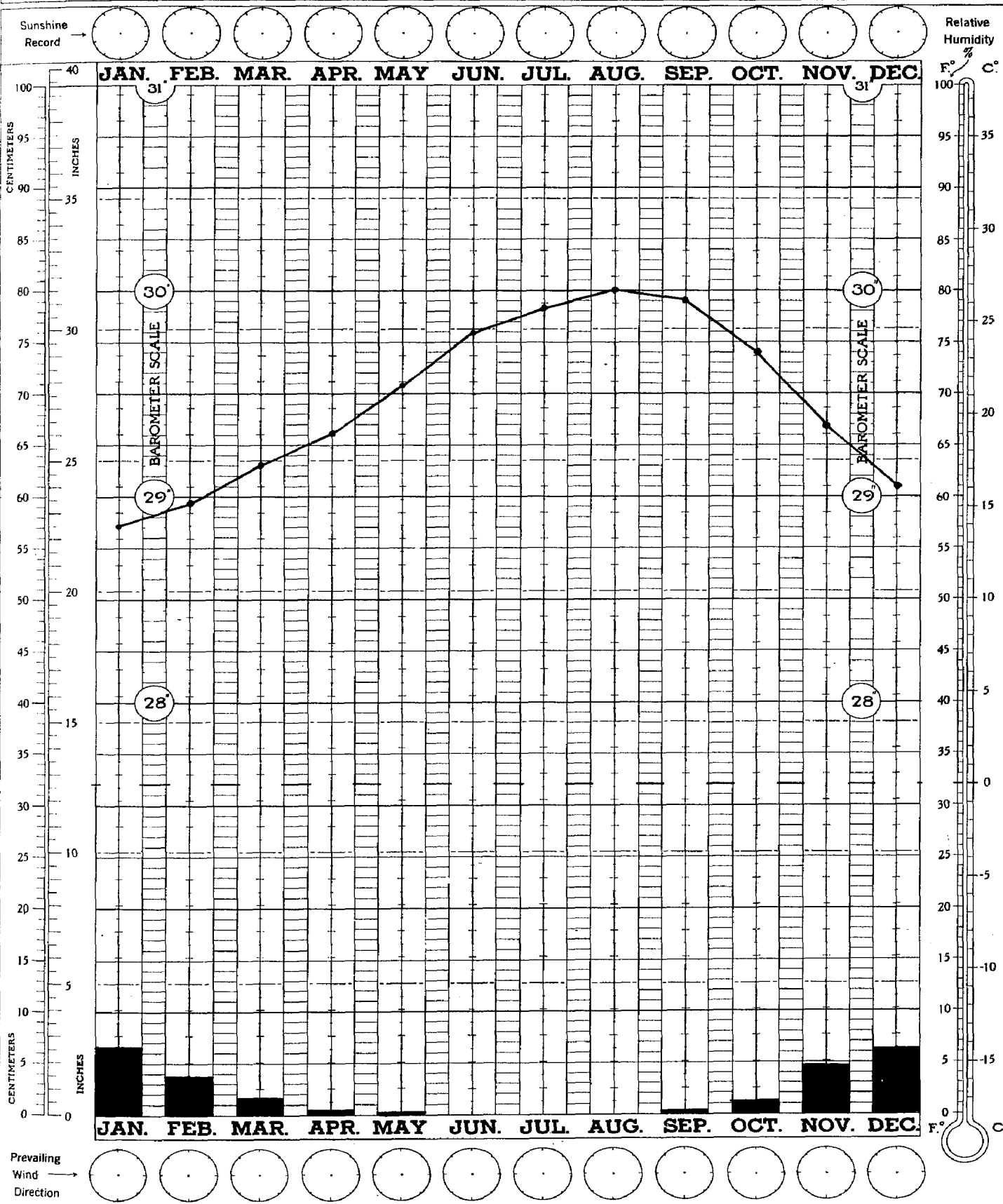
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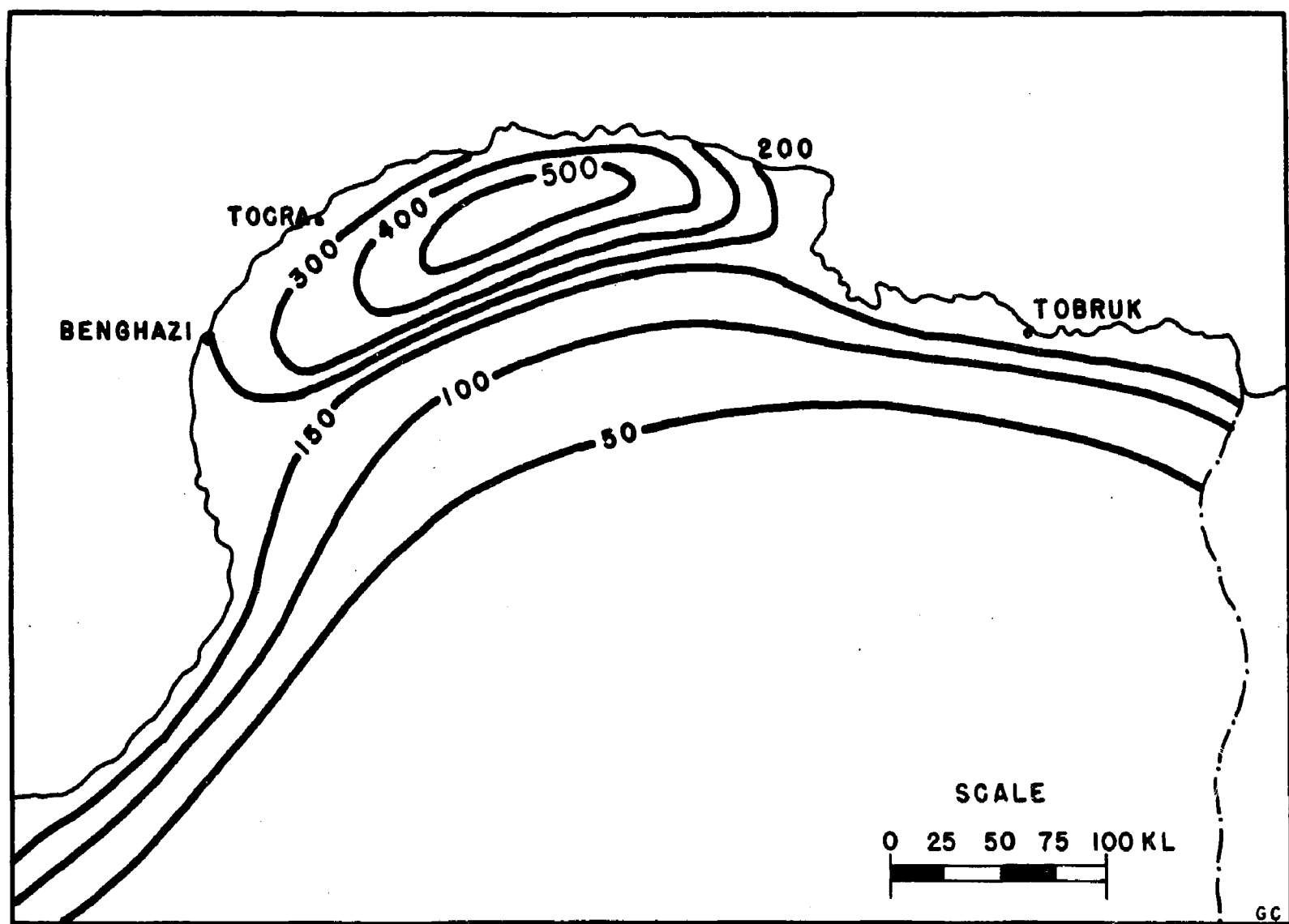
STATION BENGHAZI

Latitude 32.6 N Longitude 20.4 E Elevation _____

Average Annual Rainfall 10.1 in. Average Annual Temperature 69.2° Period of Record _____

Source W.B. Fisher, The Middle East





RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION (Mm) IN CYRENAICA

FIG. 7

The rainfall, which is more abundant here than in Tripolitania, is almost as irregular, and the same variations could be registered as on the other coast of the Great Sirte. However, the precipitation has less torrential character: the number of rainy days is proof of this. The higher part of the plateau has more than 60 days of rain per year; 70 and 75 are reached in the region of Cyrene, and wherever the rainfall is sufficient for dry farming, at least 40 rain days must be registered.

Thus the climate of Cyrenaica seems much more favorable than that of Tripolitania, but it is not without its defects. Its weather is very irregular and the summers are long and dry; on the coast the sea winds impregnated with salt are harmful to vegetation, and though the Jebel is rarely touched by the ghibli it is sometimes swept during the cold season by very violent and very cold winds which harm the trees. Finally and above all the limestone soils of Cyrenaica are much more demanding of water than are the sandy soils of Tripolitania.

In using the aforementioned climatic facts (of Libya) for a political-geographic evaluation, one must stress the fact that its climate is characterized by a remarkable uniformity introduced by the prevailing aridity. From the standpoint of political geography uniformity of climate in Libya is an asset, for the people everywhere in the country live under similar climatic conditions, face identical problems and speak the same geographical language. Therefore, uniformity of climate in Libya offers a sound basis for the establishment of a strong central government as well as providing the country with the

necessary political unity. However, uniformity of climate has a disadvantage, for it does not permit a variety of crops and thus limits the economic activities of the state.

Aridity is the outstanding characteristic of the Libyan climate and its far-reaching effects have influenced all aspects of human, economic and political life of that country. The insufficiency and variability of the annual precipitation has reduced the area of productive land, nullified the advantage of the large area the country enjoys, and has limited its economic potentialities and consequently has bequeathed to the new state a serious economic weakness. Shortage of water has rendered the greater part of the country suitable only for pastoralism, and consequently affected the mode of life of its population. Nomadism is the predominant way of life in the larger part of Libya. Thus the new state is confronted at the very outset with tremendous economic, social and political problems which are beyond its ability to solve. Conflicting economic and social interests between nomadic and sedentary population, the substitution of tribal loyalty for state loyalty on the part of the nomadic population, their primitive economic and social system, and finally their constant movement - all these are factors which will weaken the structure of the new state.

Aridity is reflected clearly in the distribution of population. Human settlements have been established in small areas where either precipitation is adequate or underground water is obtainable in sufficient quantities. Thus the country has been reduced to a number of

settlements isolated from each other by a vast solitude of empty desert. Each settled area has developed its own outlook and even promoted its own political organization. Hence the compactness provided by the shape of the country has been tremendously minimized and the political unity of the state seriously weakened.

In order to obtain a complete political-geographical evaluation of the Libyan climate the second important element of the climate must be examined. Although a very high summer temperature prevails in the interior desert, the coastal plain and the plateaux, thanks to the sea and the altitude, enjoy a moderate temperature.

All in all the climate of Libya, despite its defects, is a healthy one and its direct influence on man is equally good. Seasonal and local variations of weather are stimulating to man and although the summer temperature is high, it is not enervating for the low humidity produces a relatively low sensible temperature. The mild winter of the country is conducive to human and economic activity, while the exhilarating sunny weather of the Mediterranean favors outdoor life and provides the country with excellent winter resorts which can stimulate an important tourist industry. Throughout Libya the human problems created by climate are essentially similar and can, therefore, be treated uniformly by a centralized government.

Relief

The internal topography of the state as well as the relief of its boundaries are of political-geographical importance. Plains,

hills, plateaus and mountains are the major physiographic forms which alone or in varying combinations make up the relief of a state. These, together with the climate, determine to a very large extent the economic possibilities - advantages and limitations - afforded a nation for development. Relief, also, may be an essential basis for the delineation of boundaries. Its role in shaping the history and economic development of a state and in determining its defense policy is of major importance.

Tripolitania

The entire area of Tripolitania is composed of plains and vast plateaus underlain by very regular beds of horizontal sediments. Differences in climate and vegetation, however, have brought about variations in the appearance of the major land forms from place to place. On the basis of these differences, four physiographic regions are recognized. Three of these, the coastal zone, the Jeffara and the Jebel are belts roughly parallel to each other and to the Mediterranean coast. The fourth, the depression of Fezzan occupies the southern reaches of the area.¹ (Figure 8)

The coastal zone is a belt of sand dunes extending along most of the coast. West of Tripoli up to the Tunisian frontier the dunes are from 30 to 100 feet in height and from 300 to 700 yards in width. Behind them where the ground is but little above sea level there is

¹Enciclopedia Italiana, Milano, 1934, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 372-373.

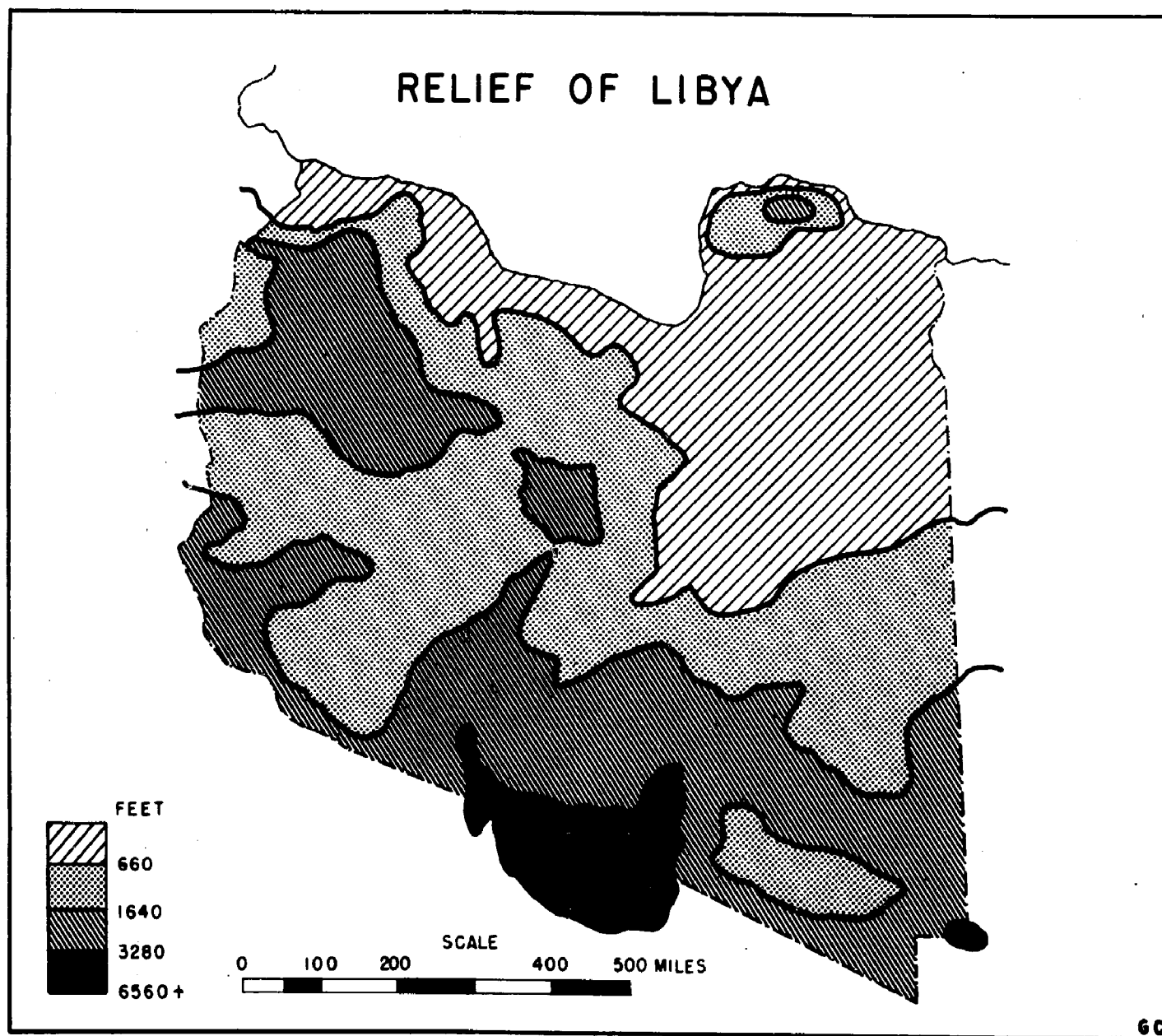


FIG. 8

a series of salt swamps or lagoons (sebkha) and oases. To the east of Tripoli the dunes are more continuous and much wider and as they are constantly moving they may have covered many salt lagoons that formerly existed. On the western side of the Great Sirte the dunes occur as a narrow ridge between the sea and the vast dried lagoon known as the Sebkhah Taworga. Behind these belts of coastal dunes is a broken line of oases which include the most important settlements and the most productive land in Tripolitania.

The Jeffara are sandy arid plains which lie south of the coastal zone and which extend inland to the foot of the Jebel. Although much of the Jeffara is barren, it contains numerous scattered oases. The surface of the Jeffara is made up of wide sandy plains with scattered sand dunes and occasional low, rocky hills. The region is roughly triangular in shape and has an area of approximately 5000 square miles. The plains rise with a gradual slope from sea level to a height of about 1000 feet at the foot of the Jebel. The southern edge is marked by a series of great delta fans formed of materials washed down the wadis cut into the Jebel surface.

The Jebel is bounded on the north by high cliffs which form the northern scarp of the main plateau of Tripolitania, a continuation of the plateau of eastern Tunisia. Four sections are recognized: (1) Jebel Nefusa near Nalut in the west (2) Jebel Yefren between Zintan and Qasr Yefren (3) Jebel Gharian to the south of Tripoli and (4) Jebel Tarhuna. To the northeast the plateau terminates in the Messellata and the hills to the southwest of Homs; to the

southeast it continues through the wide plateau of the Orfella region, then slopes eastward into the Sebkha Taworga.¹

The Jebel forms essentially one continuous plateau whose entire northern edge is intensely dissected by numerous wadis in which the streams flow only occasionally during the winter. Jebel Yefren is the most dissected part and is so rugged that it has been described as resembling the Alps. The average height of the plateau is about 2000 feet, though in some places the elevation is greater as in the extinct volcanic peak of Jebel Takuk (Takut) to the northeast of Gharian, where an elevation of 2800 feet is attained. From the northern edge of the plateau there is a gradual slope toward the south. The surface is occupied by great stony plains such as the Hamada el Hamra - the Red Plateau - which covers at least an area of 40,000 square miles. The Hamada el Hamra is the most barren desert in the area. Duveyrier, in describing this desert wrote: "Nothing can give the idea of a desert in its monotonous nakedness like this Hamada; not a drop of water, not a plant, not an insect; the very birds avoid it, fearing to cross those solitudes which are as frightening as the solitudes of the ocean."² The plateau contains few breaks in terrain, and its polished calcareous surface is white or red with yellowish silices.

Further south the surface rises again to the ranges which form

¹Ibid., pp. 372-373.

²Vidal de la Blache et L. Gallois, Geographie Universelle, Paris, 1939, Vol. XI, p. 374.

the southern boundary of the Hamada. The most important range in the south is Jebel es Soda (or Black Mountain).

From the scarp of the Jebel es Soda and its associated ranges the level descends southward into the basin of Fezzan. The southern edge of the basin is formed by the scarp of Jebel Tummo or el War, which in turn forms the edge of the Plateau of the Sahara.

On the floor of the basin of Fezzan are the important oases of Merzug, Qatrun and Tejerri. These occupy the floor of what appears to be an ancient river valley which discharged northeastward into the Great Sirte.¹

Cyrenaica

The term Cyrenaica refers geographically to the whole of the plateau country between the Great Sirte on the west and the Egyptian frontier. Its northern limit is the Mediterranean, but its southern margin is indefinite. As thus defined, Cyrenaica consists, essentially, of a massive limestone plateau which forms the northern projection of Africa between the Gulf of Sirte and Egypt.

Three physiographic divisions, in the form of parallel belts extending east and west, characterize Cyrenaica. They are: (north to south) (1) The coastal plain, (2) plateau and (3) the southern slope to the desert. (Figure 8, Page 117)

The coastal plain varies greatly in width. On the western side

¹Ibid., p. 375.

of the peninsula, at Bengazi, the maximum of 30 miles is reached; northward it rapidly narrows so that at Deriana it is only nine miles wide, and just north of Tolmita it disappears. Along the northern coast of the peninsula the plain is discontinuous, and often quite narrow: about one half mile wide at Mersa Susa, and rather wider and more continuous in the vicinity of Derna. On the eastern side, the width is often as much as 20 miles, but in some places the plateau escarpment almost reaches the coast.

The coastal plain consists of storm beaches and sand dunes; it also includes extensive lagoons and sheets of salt-charged clay on the floors of dried lagoons, of beds of sandy limestone containing abundant cockle-shells, and of fans, composed of materials washed down ravines and gulleys from the plateau.

The coastal plain is bounded to the south by the abrupt scarp of the Cyrenaican Plateau. This plateau can be divided into two main sections, Western Cyrenaica, Jebel Akadar (the Green Mountain) which extends from Bengazi into Bomba, and an eastern section, Jebel Akber (the Great Mountain) from Bomba through Marmarica to the Bay of el Sollum. Various sections of the plateau front have different names.

Near Cyrene the plateau presents two terraces; the lower one is that of el Merj with an average height of about 1000 feet; the higher terrace is that of Cyrene with an average elevation of about 2000 feet. Upon these terraces there are various areas irrigated

by springs discharging from the plateau.¹

Behind the upper cliff the land ascends slowly as undulating downs and attains its greatest height of 2500 feet near Slonta. Eastward the level of the plateau is lower. This section is called Jebel Akber.

Along its northern margin the plateau has been dissected by streams flowing down the steep scarp into the sea. The valleys cut by these streams are usually short, deep ravines or gullies. They have however so deeply dissected the northern margin of the area that its plateau character is obscured. Headwards these valleys soon become shallow depressions and disappear. The formation of these valleys presumably coincided with a period of more frequent and heavier precipitation than is characteristic today.

On the southern side of the plateau the slopes are usually so gentle that the position of the northern edge of the plateau is indiscernible and the boundary of the desert, therefore, ill-defined. In places the slopes are sufficiently definite to have been given special names, such as the Jebel Abid, which extends from Abiar to Jades. Farther south the undulation of the plateau becomes gentler and the country consists mainly of wide rolling plains, which descend gradually southward.

The surface features of this area depend mainly upon the character of the bedrock. The harder limestones form rough ground

¹Enciclopedia Italiana, Milano, 1934, Vol. X, pp. 417-418.

with abundant areas of bare limestone, and soils accue in patches in shallow depressions. Some of the limestones weather to stony moorland. The softer, chalky limestones give rise to wide plains such as those at el Merj; these plains are often floored with sheets of alluvium which constitute the best agricultural land in the country. To the south the Libyan desert extends for hundreds of miles; it is a continuous part of the Sahara which stretches across North Africa from the Nile valley to the Atlantic Ocean.

The Libyan desert with its great sand sea and its long lines of shifting sand dunes is the driest and most inhospitable part of the Sahara. Life here is confined to the very few scattered oases.

A close examination of the relief, despite its general regularity, shows some structural variety, a combination of lowlands, interior basins, plateaus and a few mountains. This variety of relief would offer the country great economic advantages were it not for the climate, which reduced the relief advantages to a minimum. Aridity is the outstanding characteristic of Libya as a whole, and this has played the major role in shaping its economic and cultural life. However, the relief has modified the effect of the climate to a certain extent. The two plateaus of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica rise to a sufficient height to cause precipitation enough to support dry farming. Hence these areas have become the major habitable regions of Libya. In the depressions of the Sahara the land sinks low enough to make underground water obtainable without much difficulty; here life has taken refuge in the scattered green oases.

A combination of relief and climate is responsible for the arid depression of Sirte, which divides the country into two separate units and makes the task of communication between them difficult. Thus it has minimized the advantage of the compactness which shape offered. Another effect of relief on transportation can be seen in the fact that both plateaus, and particularly that of Cyrenaica, with their precipitous escarpments facing toward the coastal plain, form a great obstacle to movement from the coast to the interior.

Relief, in so far as military defense is concerned, does not offer very difficult obstacles to the invader. As noted above, a combination of relief and climate has brought about the location of the habitable, productive regions of the country near its borders on both sides, east and west, while it reduced the heart of the country to a vacuum. This renders the state susceptible of losing its productive regions during the early stages of war and has consequently weakened her defenses. However, despite these weaknesses Libya is not entirely devoid of natural features that can be used for defense. The precipitous escarpment of the plateau, which overlooks the coastal plain, is of great defense value and from it the coast can easily be defended. The escarpment also renders military operations from the sea toward the interior a difficult task. The absence of major physical features of defense value along the land boundaries has been offset by the desert, which forms a natural barrier surrounding Libya from all sides. Whereas it is true that the development of techniques of modern warfare has reduced the strategic value of such a natural barrier, nevertheless the desert with its loose sand, its aridity and

its severe climate, offers many obstacles to modern armies, and still presents so formidable a military disadvantage that it forms a fairly good natural barrier for defense.

Boundaries

The boundaries of Libya are a striking example of desert boundaries. The desert which surrounds Libya on three sides provides an excellent natural barrier between it and its neighbors. This vast area of unproductive land, almost devoid of life, has helped greatly to reduce to a minimum friction around the borders and has made the task of the delineation of these boundaries fairly easy.

The boundaries of Libya are mere straight lines laid down on the map. They are, for the most part, artificial boundaries, made on paper at conference tables. Nowhere in Libya do the natural boundaries coincide with the political. The country itself does not change in character at the boundaries, nor for hundreds of miles beyond. The fertile coastal plain, the Jebel zone, and the desert with its differing surface conditions, stretch out from Libya into her neighbor-territories without any natural separation. No prominent natural features such as high mountain ranges, large river valleys or great bodies of water offer limits that protrude above the surface or that are carved into it.

In such arid regions strategic positions are not determined solely by the physical features of the terrain, for water plays the leading role in determining the boundaries and gives these natural

features their strategic values. Thus wells and springs are among the most important strategic points on such boundaries.

The total length of the land boundaries of Libya measures about 2780 miles, of which only 530 miles have been charted.¹ This distance cannot be considered great in proportion to the area of the country. The longest part of the Libyan border is the one in common with French possessions. From Ras Ajir on the Mediterranean coast to the oasis of Ghadamas a distance of approximately 300 miles, Tunisia is Libya's neighbor. The border line first crosses the lagoons and marshes near the coast at Ras Ajir, then taking a southerly direction it cuts the coastal plain and slices across the steppe, which is the western continuation of the Libyan Jeffara. Continuing southward it crosses the western tip of the Jebel area, then proceeds to the Serir desert, where it meets the border line of the territory of French Sudan south of the oasis of Ghadamas, which is in Libya. The Libya-Tunisia frontier is unlike the rest of the Libyan boundaries, in that it is not a straight line. The border follows a rather sinuous and zigzag pattern, for it crosses, especially in its northern part, a fairly thickly settled region, and for its longer part, crosses plain and almost featureless terrain, suitable for military operations, especially in the Jeffara section. Since it offers no strategic advantages to either side, artificial fortifications are necessary for the purpose of defence.

The southern segment of the western boundary of Libya is common

¹ Grothe, op. cit., p. 24.

with the French territory of the Sudan, which is under the administration of Algeria. For 750 miles, from Ghadamas as far as the well of El Uaar, which is situated on the caravan route of Murzug-Bilma, the border line follows a north-south course. It crosses the Hamada el Hamra desert in its northern part, just south of Ghadamas, and reaches the plateau of Tassili in the south-western corner of Libya on its southern side.

The southern boundary of Libya remained for a long time a matter of dispute, first between Turkey and France and secondly between Italy and France.¹ Prior to 1919 no part of this boundary was defined clearly. While on the one hand, Turkey, and later Italy, claimed that

¹At the time when Italy took possession of Libya, the southern frontier of the territory formed the subject of a dispute between France and the Ottoman Empire. As successor state, and on the basis of the hinterland doctrine, Italy laid claim to the entire region over which the Ottoman Empire had asserted its sovereignty since 1890, regardless of the fact that a large portion of it had been gradually occupied by the French after 1900. Italy demanded the cession of Tibesti, Barou, and Ennedi and possibly Lake Chad as territorial compensation under Article 13 of the Treaty of London.

During the early period of African colonization, France encouraged exploration of the Tripolitanian hinterland. The Turkish government, aware of France's aspirations, addressed a note to both France and Great Britain on October 30, 1890, in which it attempted to fix the limits of Libya to the south. On the basis of the hinterland doctrine the Sublime Porte asserted a claim to the territories of Tibesti, Borou and Bornu, and declared that the settlement of Barrowa on Lake Chad was to remain within the sphere of Turkish influence. France did not, at the time, deny the claims of the Ottoman Empire. On March 21, 1899, however, France and Great Britain signed a declaration indicating their respective spheres of influence in central Africa. According to this declaration, Tibesti, Borou and Ennedi were included within the French sphere of influence.

Libyan territory extended south as far as Lake Chad, France on the other hand was the de facto owner of these territories.¹ The first agreement defining southern boundary of Libya was signed in 1919² between Italy and France by which part of the southwestern boundary became fixed. However, the remaining boundary to the southeast remained a disputed question until 1935, when France and Italy came into agreement and settled this dispute by the treaty of April 26, 1935.³ At this time France ceded to Italy a large trapizoidal strip along the borders between French West Africa and Equatorial Africa on the one side and Libya on the other. (Figure 9) Although this newly gained

¹Vera Micheles Dean, The Southern Frontier of Libya, Foreign Policy Association, Vol. VI, 1930, p. 2.

²By the Bonin-Pichon agreement of September 12, 1919, France agreed to rectify the western frontier of Libya on the line Ghadamas-Tummo. This rectification merely straightened out two French salients which had previously projected into the southwestern flank of the desert hinterland of Libya and extended the border line into the Plateau of Tassili in the very southwestern corner. Consequently the oases of El Barkat, Fehoug and the caravan route which connects Ghadmas directly with Ghat were ceded to Italian Libya. Afrique Francaise, Vol. XXX, 1920, p. 88.

³The first French territorial concessions to Italy in Africa, made under the Bonin-Pichon treaty of 1919, had never been accepted on the Italian side as a full and fair settlement of French obligations under the London treaty of April 26, 1915. Therefore France had made another concession which is embodied in the general declaration of January 7, 1935, according to which a large trapizoidal strip of French territory along the borders between French West Africa and Equatorial Africa on the one side and Libya on the other was given to Italy. However this concession would not appear to have been of substantially greater value than those of 1919, for it added to Libya a large tract of valueless desert. Arnold Torynbee, Survey of International Affairs, London, 1927, Vol. I, pp. 91-118.

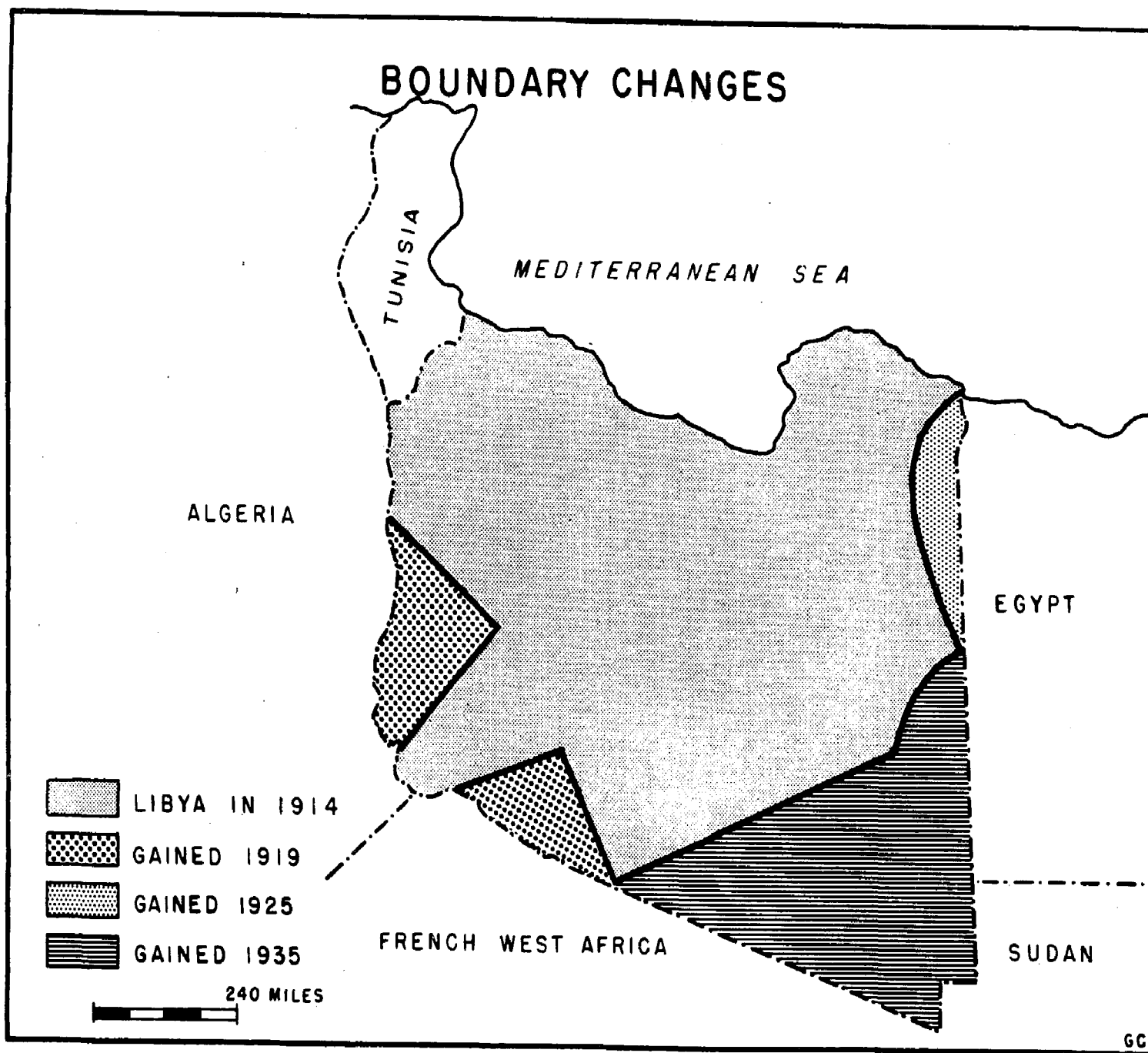


FIG. 9

territory is impressive in its large area (44,000 square miles) it is actually a worthless tract of poor, unproductive desert and almost uninhabited land. However, it has important strategic value, for it extends Libyan territories into the heart of Africa.

Libya's southern boundary in its final form extends for about 750 miles from the El Uaar well in the west to the Tibesti mountains in the south, then eastward to the Plateau of Erdi, which is the southernmost point of Libya. This boundary of Libya follows a diagonally straight line with a N.W.-S.E. orientation and traverses in its entire length desert country.

The eastern boundaries of Libya comprise the Egypto-Libyan boundaries, which form the longest part of Libya's eastern frontier, and the Libya-Anglo-Egyptian Sudan boundary, which occupies the very southeastern corner of Libya. For about 700 miles the Egypto-Libyan boundary extends in a straight line and in a general north-south direction. This boundary was fixed and delineated in its present form through an agreement between Italy and Egypt in 1925.¹ (Figure 9)

¹So long as both of them were under the judicial sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire no diplomatic difficulties were created by the fact that the boundary had never been delineated. When, however, in the autumn of 1911, the Italians invaded the Ottoman provinces of Tripoli and Cyrenaica and declared a blockade of the coast as far east as the 27th degree of longitude East, the British Foreign Office was constrained to protest on behalf of Egypt that the Egyptian frontier lay west of the port of Sollum. The British government afterwards notified Italy that the Egyptian frontier also ran west of the oasis of Jaghbub, which lay about 100 miles southeast of Sollum in the Libyan desert.

When Britain recognized the independence of Egypt on February 25, 1922, then the question of the Egyptian-Libyan frontier fell within the authority of Egypt. Therefore Egypt and Italy entered into negotiation

According to this agreement, the frontier starts from a point on the coast about seven miles west of the northern extremity of Sollum Bay and runs thence in a southerly direction, coinciding approximately with the line 25° East longitude. It continues its southerly direction until it meets the Libya-Anglo-Egyptian Sudan frontier at Jebel el Uweinat. The border line crosses, in the north, the escarpment which curves westward from behind Sidi Barrani towards Sollum and Bardia. This escarpment is steep and broken and generally impassable to wheeled vehicles, therefore it forms an obstacle for military operations, especially towards the west. Southwards the border line extends through the region of the Libyan desert. It traverses the great sand sea south of Jaghbub and the Siwa oasis. From this sand sea enormous dunes run for a great distance away southwards in parallel rows, unbroken by any gap. They present a formidable obstacle to east-west movement. The extreme aridity of this desert (Libyan desert), its large areas of sand sea and the absence of any

to settle the frontier dispute. On May 18, 1925, a mixed Italo-Egyptian Delineation Commission was appointed to survey and delineate the border line between the two countries, and on December 6, 1925, an agreement was finally signed at Cairo.

Under this agreement Egypt recognized the sovereignty of Italy over Jaghbub, while Italy ceded to Egypt the Ramlah wells northwest of Sollum. The new frontier started from a point on the coast ten kilometers west of the northern extremity of Sollum Bay, and ran thence in a southerly direction, approximately coinciding with the line of longitude 25° East. The border line continues its southerly direction until it meets the Libya - Anglo-Egyptian Sudan frontier. Arnold J. Toynbee, Survey of International Affairs, London, 1927, Vol. I, pp. 184-187.

road, are all important factors in making it extremely difficult, though not impossible, for a modern army to operate on either side of the boundary. Thus the natural barrier which effectively separates the two countries provides them with more or less natural boundary or boundary zone.

In its southeasternmost corner Libya adjoins the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. The boundary between the two countries is a continuation of the line of the Egypto-Libyan border southward with generally the same characteristics. The Libyan - Anglo-Egyptian Sudan boundary extends for about 300 miles from Jebel el Uweinat in the north to the boundary of French Equatorial Africa in the south. This part of the frontier was defined by an exchange of notes between Italy and Great Britain on July 20, 1934.¹

Sea Boundaries

Libya's sea boundary extends for about 1400 miles along the southern shore of the Mediterranean. The coast can be divided into three sections: the coast of Tripolitania, the coast of Sirte and the coast of Cyrenaica. The coast of Tripolitania is about 600 miles long. From Ras Ajir on the Tunisian frontier to Tripoli the shore is low with small relief toward the land. However, it offers

¹The southeastern limit of Libya was defined by the exchange of notes between Italy and Great Britain on July 20, 1934. According to these notes the boundary continued the 25th meridian south from 22° latitude, thence west to the 24th meridian, and then south "as far as the junction with the frontier of French possessions." S. Whittemore Boggs, International Boundaries, pp. 159-161.

small but good harbors at Zinra and Sabratha. At Ras Ez-Aur a cliff reaching into the sea forms a small but good natural harbor at Tripoli. Eastward to Misurata the coastline is straight, and here the large sand dunes reach the sea. It offers only a few small harbors.

The portion between Ras el-Burj and Ras El Mugtaa forms the coast of Sirte. Here the coast extends for about 350 miles in an almost straight line; it is low and level with many sand dunes. The water is shallow, thus it does not offer any deep well-sheltered harbors.

Cyrenaica has a coast of about 450 miles in length. Its western part is a continuation of the Sirte coast, therefore it is low and sandy. Up to Tolmeta there is no good harbor except that of Bengazi. Beyond Tolmeta the first cliff of the plateau falls almost directly into the sea and the coast appears high and in places rocky.

Beyond Ras el Teen, which is considered the eastern limit of Cyrenaica, the Marmarica coast starts. It is less uniform and is interrupted by deep bays which form good harbors, such as the large Gulf of Bomba, and further east the safer and deeper one of Tobruk.

Generally speaking the coast of Libya is difficult to defend. It is long and open, thus considerable naval power and strong coastal fortifications are necessary to repel an invasion from the sea. However, despite its natural weakness it offers some strategic values for defense. The two plateaus of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, with their steep escarpments which come sometimes directly into the sea, offer strong positions for defense, while the shallow waters of the Sirte coast, the many coastal lagoons and the numerous sand dunes offer obstacles for both naval landings and military operations along the coast.

CHAPTER V

HUMAN FOUNDATIONS

Population

The ancient racial basis of Libya is the so-called Libyan people who belong to the Hamite race. The Libyan race has lived in Libya since the dawn of history and the country received its name from them.

Libya with its position in the central basin of the Mediterranean and its long, open coast, had attracted the sea-faring nations from the very early days of its history. Its vicinal location had also made it a bridge between the two productive parts of North Africa, the Nile Valley and the Atlas. Hence the Phoenicians, a sea-faring and commercial nation of Semitic origin, established their colonies on the coast of Tripolitania from Carthage in Tunisia as far as the plateau of Cyrenaica. Likewise the Greeks, another Mediterranean, commercial and sea-faring nation of Aryan stock, established themselves on the coast of Cyrenaica. Greek cities in Cyrenaica were the center from which the Greek civilization spread in this part of North Africa. Jews who, under military pressure from their neighbors, were driven from Palestine also formed an important element of the population. They chose Cyrenaica to be their new home and settled there in great numbers at an early date in history. At the Roman period a great number of Romans chose Tripolitania to be their home; the ruins of

their metropolis, Leptis Magna, indicate the great prosperity the country enjoyed at that time. All these human waves which entered Libya at different times during her past history have been integrated into the racial structure of her population and have therefore to some extent left their racial, biological and cultural influences upon the present inhabitants of the country. However, the most important anthropological and cultural influence was brought by the Arab invasions, which started in the seventh century and continued up till the eleventh century. During this period a considerable number of Arabs moved into Libya, sometimes through military conquest, sometimes through peaceful penetration. The Arabs assimilated all remnants of the older races and cultures and gave the population its present racial and cultural structure. The political boundaries of Libya do not coincide with the ethnographic boundaries, for Arab-speaking people spread across the boundaries both into Egypt and Tunisia. However, the Saharan boundary to the south is a racial boundary. The structure of the present population of Libya is relatively homogeneous despite its complex historical background and the diversity of its composition. This uniformity of population provides a strong human basis for the new state.

Since no accurate census has yet been made in Libya it is rather difficult to obtain a correct idea of the exact size of the population. The latest figure supplied by the British Military Administration at the end of 1947 indicates that the country has

about 1,150,000 inhabitants.¹

The average density of population is very low, less than two persons per square mile. This phenomenon of sparse population finds its explanation in the great areas of unproductive desert that make up the largest part of Libya's 700,000 square miles. Irregularity in distribution of population is a conspicuous phenomenon. Climatic as well as physiographic factors have played a decisive role in shaping the pattern of this distribution. Thus the bulk of the country's population, located in rather small but well-watered areas, is an inevitable human response to geographic conditions. (Figure 10)

Of the 1,150,000 inhabitants approximately 800,000 live in the region of Tripolitania. (Figure 11) The average density of population for the province is about eight persons per square mile. However, it is about 30 persons per square mile in the densely populated areas.² The thickly settled parts of Tripolitania consist of: 1) the narrow coastal belt of oases between Misurata and Zuara, which contains 60 per cent of the population of the territory, and 2) the northern edge of the plateau (Jebel) from Homs in the east to the Tunisian frontier in the west. In these areas the rainfall is sufficient to support a sedentary agriculture.

It is estimated that Cyrenaica, occupying an area of approximately 280,000 square miles, has a population of about 300,000

¹Annual Report, United Nations. Commissioner in Libya, New York, 1950, p. 4.

²Chia-Lin Pan, "The Population of Libya" Population Studies, Vol. III, 1949, p. 113.

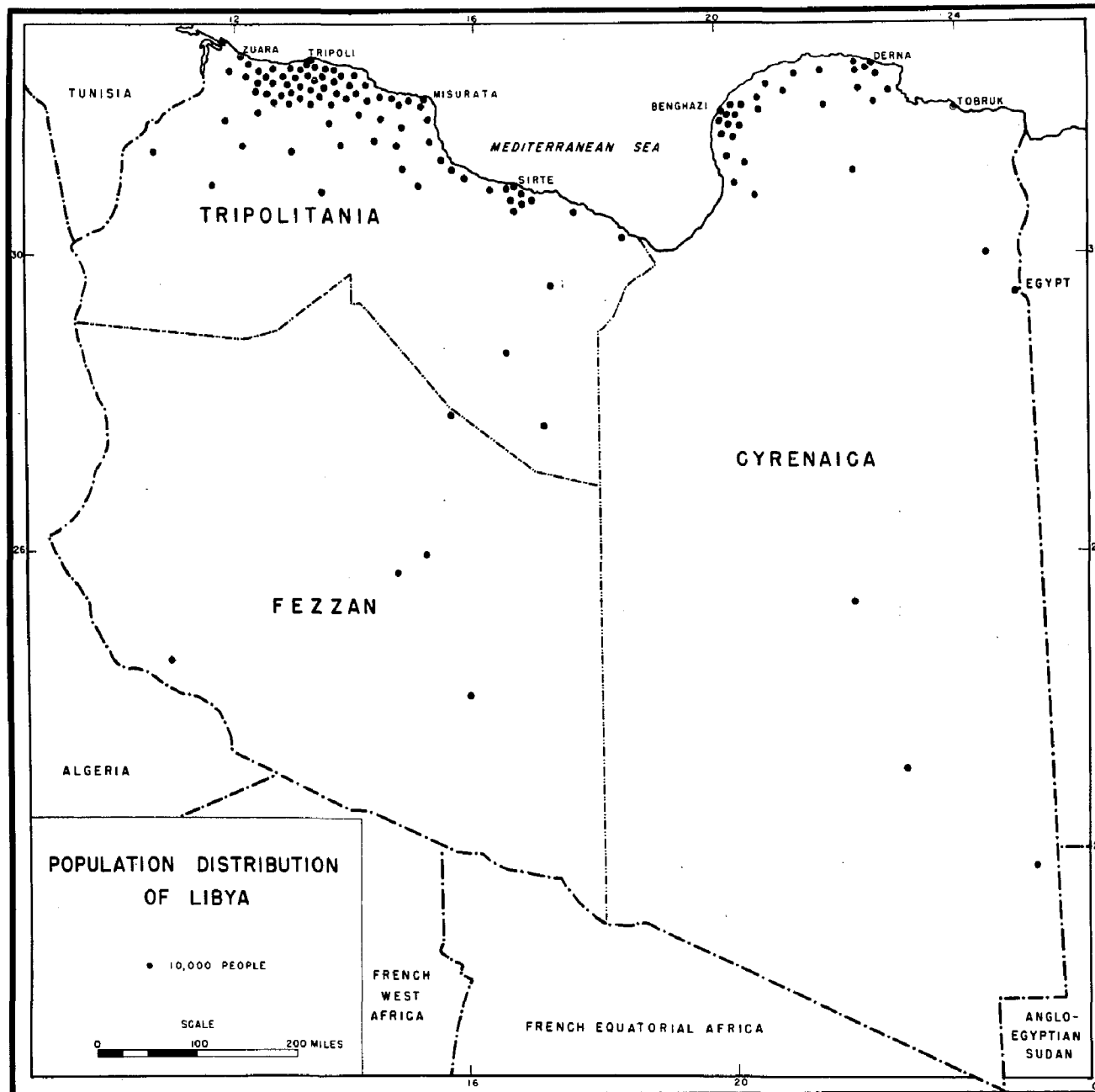


FIG 10

POPULATION OF THE LIBYAN PROVINCES 1948

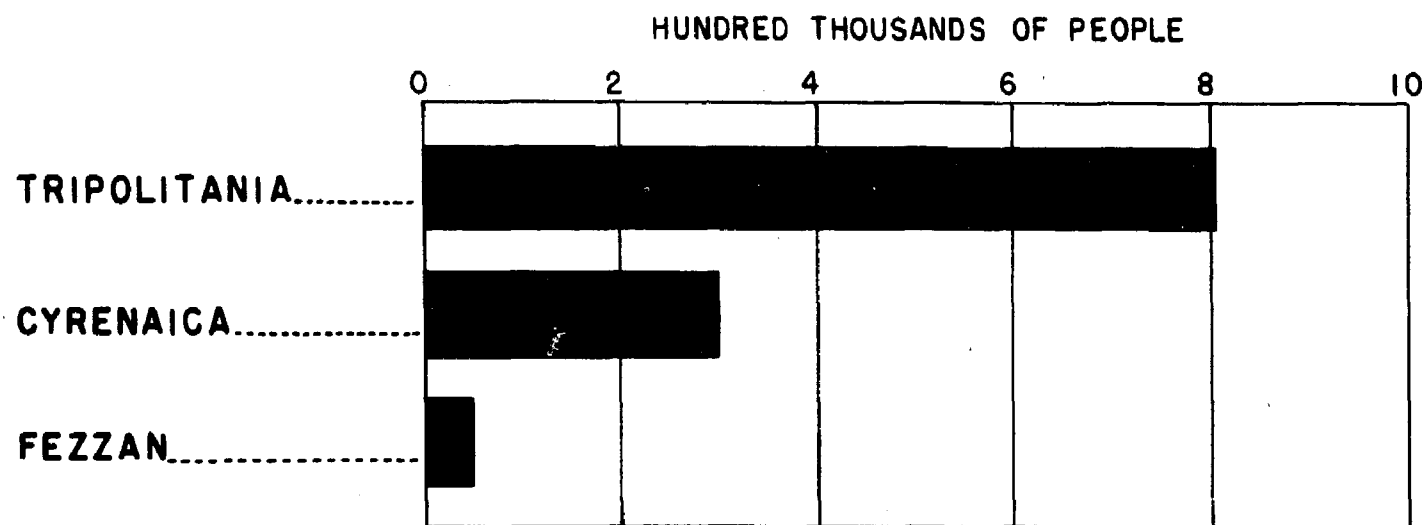


FIG. II

inhabitants, (Figure 11), but the largest part of the province is an empty desert. Thus the density of population for the region as a whole is very low, being just over one person per square mile. However, in the inhabited area of so-called Cyrenaica proper, the density of population is about 18 persons per square mile.¹ The overwhelming majority of this population lives on the plateau (Jebel) area where true Mediterranean climatic conditions prevail and where precipitation, due to orographic reasons, is higher than elsewhere in the province. Natives here lead a sedentary life in permanent settlements. They raise cereals, especially barley, olive-trees, vines and other kinds of fruit. The rest of the population lives either in the coastal settlements, wherever the plateau gives way for a narrow coastal plain, or in the scattered Saharan oases. A few thousand nomads still wander in the vast area of the Libyan desert.

Fezzan is very sparsely populated, having a population of about 50,000 inhabitants spread over an area of more than 250,000 square miles. One fifth of this population is nomadic or semi-nomadic, while the rest is composed of sedentary farmers inhabiting the three groups of oases, Sebkhah, Barke and Murzuk, which lie within the depression.²

Three groups of people live in Fezzan:

- (1) The Arabic-speaking tribes who live in the northwest, some of

¹Pan, op. cit., p. 113.

²Four Power Report on Libya, Section II, p. 4.

whom have now settled in the Shatti region.

(2) The Taureg who live in the west of the area, some of whom have become sedentary farmers in the western part of Wadi Ajal and in Wadi Atba.

(3) The Tebus who live in the southeast and in the foothills of the Tibesti and are spread as far as Fort Lamy. These last are the only real nomads in the Fezzan province.

The settled population constitutes the majority of the inhabitants (approximately 32,000). They are of mixed ethnographic groups as we shall see later, and live in villages built in the valleys where the water is near the surface and irrigation agriculture is possible.¹

Ethnographic structure of the Population

Ethnography is of great importance in the understanding of any nation and in the evaluation of its political strength. Ethnography has a cultural and social foundation.

Libya has a simple ethnographic structure at the present time, although elements of several ethnographic groups still exist. The blending of the two major ethnographic groups of the population, namely the Arabs and the Berbers, took place long ago and has matured now to form the present population.

The ethnographic structure of the present population of Libya

¹ Annual Report of the French Government on Fezzan., p. 11.

is composed of the following groups: the Arabs, the Berbers, the Italians, the Jews, the negroes and the Cologhli.

The Arabs

The Arabs are a semitic race. Their original homeland was the Arabian peninsula, and their major known physical characteristics are oval face, straight prominent nose, medium stature and slight build.¹

They were established in North Africa through two waves of invasion, the first of which came directly from Arabia at the time of Arab expansion in the seventh century and brought families of aristocratic Arabs from Hejaz and Yemen. These invaders came mostly without wives and married Berber women. Although they converted the Berbers of the countryside to Islam, they did not force them to accept Arabic speech, which at that time was confined largely to the cities. The second invasion came in the eleventh century, and was one of much greater volume and importance. This second wave of Arabs included the Beni Hillal and Beni Suleim, tribes of Beduin from the northern Arabian desert. These elements introduced the first numerically important infusion of Arab blood into North Africa and succeeded in converting Libya, at least culturally, almost completely into an Arab land.²

¹Carleton S. Coon, The Races of Europe, New York, 1939, p. 403.

²Enciclopedia Italiana, Milano, 1934, Vol. X, pp. 421-422.

At the present time the Arab inhabitants of Libya are so mixed with the Berbers that even the tribes which claim to be of pure Arab descent have some Berber blood. This is especially true of the western regions, the Arab stock becoming progressively pure towards the east.

In Tripolitania the coastal plain is inhabited by Arabs with important, but assimilated (Arabized) elements of Berbers. The steppe further south is inhabited by several Arab tribes such as the Aulad Bu Sef, Beni Waleed, Jedadfa and others which claim to be pure Arabs, although they are actually partly Berber.¹ Pure Arabs are more common west and southwest of Tarhuna, while west of Nalut the Arab strain becomes weaker. Even in the Jebel area, where Berbers are numerous, the Arabs form a conspicuous element of the population, especially in the eastern part around Tarhuna and Msellta.

In Cyrenaica the Arab stock forms the predominant element of the population. The Berber element here, though not completely absent, is so small as to have little effect on the physical make-up, or in the cultural life of the population. These Berber elements have been almost completely assimilated by Arabs through a long period of Arab domination.²

¹Enciclopedia Italiana, Milano, 1934, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 375-376.

²Pritchard, op. cit., p. 47.

The Berbers

The Berbers, who were the original inhabitants of North Africa, are classified as an Hamitic race and speak an Hamitic language. The name Berber refers to various branches of the indigenous Libyan race. However the origin of the name is doubtful. Some derive it from the word Barbarians, employed first by the Greeks and later by the Romans; others attribute it to the Arab conquerors. Anyhow this name was used and is still being used to identify groups of tribes who belong to the Hamitic race and live in North Africa from the Nile valley westward to the Atlantic Ocean.

The earliest account of this race comes from the ancient Egyptian records of wars against the Libyans. The Egyptians, throughout their artistic history, took pains to distinguish the Libyans from other people by well-defined physical peculiarities. The Libyans are shown as a white race with light skin, their faces usually more sharply cut in profile than those of the Egyptians; the brow ridges are often prominent, the nose aquiline, the chin pointed and the beard moderately abundant.¹ These characteristics reappear today most clearly in certain isolated tribes in North Africa. The Berber in general is now of a darker complexion, and is usually thickset and powerfully built. He is marked by the size of his upper front teeth and by a horizontal furrow across the forehead. However despite the race difference between the Arabs and the Berbers, it seems difficult

¹Coon, op. cit., pp. 475-476.

to distinguish at first sight between them because of the similarity of their physical characteristics, as both stocks belong to the Mediterranean race and also because both Arabs and Berbers have become so intermixed in the course of time. As a consequence of this, pure Arabs or pure Berbers practically do not exist.¹

Since, however, the Arabs were the conquering race in Libya, there was a tendency for Berbers to adopt Arabic and to claim Arab descent rather than vice versa, whereas the universal domination of Mohammedanism tended to spread the language of the Koran (Arabic). As a result, almost all Arabized Berbers speak Arabic, while other Berber elements who live in the Jebel region and still retain their Berber speech, are bilingual.

The majority of the Berber population of Tripolitania live in the western part of the Jebel region, around Nalut, Zuara, Jebel Nefusa and the western part of the Yefren district. They took refuge in this mountainous region when they were dislodged from the coastal plain by the invaders.² However, even in this region there are strong Arab elements and the Berbers live side by side with Arabs in the same villages. It is very difficult to obtain an exact figure for the population who still retain the Berber language in Tripolitania. However they are estimated at about

¹Walter Fitzgerald, Africa, London, 1933, pp. 387-388.

²Enciclopedia Italiana, Milano, 1934, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 375-376.

150,000 persons.¹

In Cyrenaica the entire Berber population has been almost completely assimilated and the present population can be described as Arabs and Arabized Berbers. Nevertheless some thousands of Berber stock, who live mainly in the oases of Augila and Jalo, still retain the Berber language but also speak Arabic.²

There is little prospect that the Berber population might in the future form an anti-national ethnographic group which could create political problems for the new state, since their great devotion to the Mohammedan faith tends to bind them to the Arab population and to offset any ethnological differences. The long process of Arabization has also weakened the national consciousness among the Berbers. Moreover the similarity between the two groups in their way of life, their customs, their physical characters, and finally their combined economic interests are all important factors in strengthening the national unity and in eliminating conditions that might create future difficulties for the state.

The Italians

Italians form the larger part of the foreign element in the country. In 1911 there was an Italian community of about 800, which

¹Enciclopedia Italiana, Milano, 1934, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 375-376.

²Evans Pritchard, The Sanusi of Cyrenaica, London, 1949, p. 47.

grew steadily from the beginning of the Italian occupation of Libya. By 1928 the number of Italians exceeded 10,000, and by 1935, 20,000. With the inception of peasant immigration under the demographic colonization scheme, this total increased rapidly to over 44,000 in 1936 and 70,000 in 1940. In 1943 under British occupation there were only 38,200 Italians. The remainder had returned to Italy.¹

The policy of the British Military Administration in Libya was to maintain, as far as possible, the level of the Italian community as it had been at the end of 1943 and to stop further immigration of Italians to the country, except under the Administration-organized repatriation scheme, which affected only the wives and children of those already resident in the territory. This policy was to be adhered to until the final status of the territory had been determined.²

The Italian population increased by 962 persons as a result of exchanges between December, 1943, and December, 1947, and during the same period the Italian population increased from 33,000 to approximately 44,000 persons, through an increase of births. At the present time, Italians number 45,000. All of these live in Tripolitania, since, by order of the Italian government, the entire pre-war Italian population of Cyrenaica (about 22,000) left the

¹Four Power Report on Libya, Part I, p. 5.

²Annual Report of the U. N. Commissioner in Libya, New York, 1950, p. 5.

country, save a few priests and nuns, before its final occupation by allied forces in 1943.¹

Half of the Italian population in Tripolitania are town dwellers, about 20,000 alone in the city of Tripoli. They are mainly skilled workers, clerks, traders and members of the professions. The remaining half are farmers.²

Under the new regime in Libya the Italians are considered aliens, as they still hold Italian citizenship and therefore cannot participate in the political life of the country.

The Italian minority in Libya constitutes the only anti-national ethnographic group of any importance that might in the future stir up political as well as social unrest for the state. Although their number is small in comparison with the total population, they enjoy great importance in the social and economic life of the country. This importance emanates from the fact that they possess a higher economic and cultural standard than the rest of the population.

The Jews

The Jews form one of the oldest elements of population in the coastal towns, but they are not found in the interior of the country. They are believed to be descendants, in large part, of Jews who came

¹Four Power Report on Libya, Section II, p. 4.

²Annual Report of the U. N. Commissioner in Libya, New York, 1950, p. 5.

to Cyrenaica from Egypt in the first three centuries B.C., and also of those who arrived there after the downfall of the Jewish state in Palestine in the first century A.D.¹ Historical records show that they had a flourishing and prosperous community in the Greco-Roman period. There are also Spanish Jews who came from Salonika, Smyrna and Constantinople, where they had taken refuge from the persecution of the Spaniards.

Linguistically, all Jews are Arabized and speak the Arabic language except for a few of them who have come recently from Spain; these still retain the Spanish language, although they use Arabic in their daily life. They have also adopted the Arab way of life and wear the same native costumes.

The number of the Jewish community was about 29,000 in 1948, about 4,500 of them in Cyrenaica, mainly in the city of Bengazi, and 20,000 of the remaining in the city of Tripoli.² The rest were scattered through the coastal towns of Tripolitania. Since their major occupations are trade and small handicrafts, they are an almost exclusively urban population.

The number of the Jewish community has been rapidly diminishing in the last two years because of emigration, largely to Israel. This exodus has reduced the Jewish community from about 29,000 to the present figure of about 13,000. Almost all of these live in

¹Enciclopedia Italiana, Milano, 1934, Vol. X, pp. 421-422.

²Four Power Report on Libya, Part I, p. 4.

Tripolitania, for the entire Jewish community of Cyrenaica has already left the country.¹ The rate of emigration has recently slackened because of economic problems in Israel, but it is believed that the remnant of the Jewish community in Libya will soon move to Israel.

As a result of the present struggle between the Arabs and the Jews, the Jewish minority would have formed another sizeable anti-national ethnographic group had they chosen to continue living in Libya.

The Negro

The Negro element is the only one in the population having different racial background, and although the number of negroes is not large at the present time, their racial influence on the population of Libya has been considerable. From time immemorial negroes were brought to the North African coast by the slave trade, and were found almost everywhere in domestic slavery, and, later, settled in their own villages - groups of miserable huts outside the towns. They have everywhere influenced the character of the race by crossbreeding, but in Fezzan, this influence is most pronounced. Negroid characteristics in the population become progressively more marked towards the south; in the oases such as Jafra and Siwa the dark pigmentation of the inhabitants is conspicuous.

¹Annual Report of U. N. Commissioner in Libya, New York, 1950, p. 4.

The negro element of Libya came chiefly from the Sudan, Wajanga, Barku, Wadia and Bantu regions further south. At the present time the negro population is Moslem and the Arabic language is their native tongue.¹ There is little prospect that this element may form an anti-national, racial or ethnographical minority in Libya: 1) they have no national feeling of their own since they were completely Arabized; and 2) the Arab population of Libya is not color conscious.

The Cologhliis

The Cologhliis are descendants of Turkish mercenaries or slave soldiers of the old Ottoman Empire who remained in Libya and married Arab wives. They are most numerous in the large cities; Tripoli, Misurata and Bengazi. They are Moslems in religion and linguistically Arabized.² Their number does not exceed a few thousand and, since they were completely assimilated by the Libyan population, they do not form a distinctive ethnographic group.

Social Structure

The native population of Libya can be divided, on the basis of their mode of life and community structure, into three classes: (1) the urban population, (2) the rural population, (3) the nomadic

¹Pan, op. cit., p. 103.

²Ibid.

and semi-nomadic population.

The urban population of Libya, approximately 300,000, lives in the coastal cities of Tripoli, Misurata, Bengazi and in the smaller cities. Tripoli has a population of 38,000 and Bengazi 35,000.¹ The urban population is engaged mainly in handicrafts and trade, and constitutes a mixture of Arabs and Arabized Berbers with no tribal bonds.

Since many of the rural inhabitants combine pastoralism and shifting cereal cultivation with sedentary farming, it is very difficult to classify the population by numbers according to their way of life. Nevertheless, estimates indicate that more than half of the rural population of Tripolitania are settled farmers, and live in the coastal areas and in the Jebel. The remainder follow a nomadic or semi-nomadic way of life.

Semi-nomadic people are numerous, both in the Jebel and in the steppe bordering the oases.² Those who live in village communities often have land at some distance from their homes, which necessitates seasonal movement in order to cultivate the land. The wholly nomadic population represents less than 10 percent of the total population and is much less important in Tripolitania than in Cyrenaica. These are found principally in the Syrtica and the Ghibla areas.

¹W. E. Fisher, The Middle East, London, 1950, p. 489.

²About 12 percent of the total population of Libya (Pan).

All the indigenous rural peoples originally belonged to tribal units (Qabilah), but during the Italian occupation the strength of the bonds uniting these Qabilahs into tribes were weakened, and only in the southern desert area and in the west are the tribes sufficiently large and cohesive to be the dominant element in the social structure. Elsewhere authority has tended to pass from the tribal heads to the government officials in charge of the administration.¹

The tribe is usually divided into two or three main subdivisions. These primary sub-divisions are further divided into secondary, and the secondary into tertiary groups. The smallest unit is the beyt (house) or extended family. This structure is not a hierarchy leading to a single head. Authority is wielded by the sheikhs, and is considerable in all matters affecting collective life. Only a state of war or an emergency of similar magnitude would produce united political leadership of an entire tribe. The sheikh is usually chosen from the most eminent members of a Qabilah. Each tribe and each sub-division has its own homeland, an area to which it lays claim by rights of custom and extended use.

In Cyrenaica all the rural population are Arabs, although strains of other races are present. Almost all are nomadic in habit, depending chiefly upon flocks and herds, although they also raise crops of barley where rainfall permits. The social structure is tribal in character.

¹Four Power Report on Libya, Section I, p. 7.

The tribes of Cyrenaica spring from two sources. The first is the Saadi, descendants of the Beni Suleim who, coming from Arabia, conquered Cyrenaica and settled there in the eleventh century A.D.¹ The Saadi tribes form two large groups: (1) el-Baraghith, which is the western group and comprises the four tribes of el-Magharbah (especially in the Syrtic), el-Awaqir, el-Argah and el-Abid. (2) el-Harabi, which is the eastern group and comprises the tribes of el-Abeidat, el-Hasa, el-Darsa and el-Baraasa. The second is the Murabtin, descendants of the conquered Berbers. Their origin is not well known, but they claim to be descendants of a saint (murabit), who by tradition came to Cyrenaica from Morocco some centuries ago. These people therefore enjoy special prestige, though now they are actually Arab in character.²

In the early days the Murabitin were subservient to the Saadi tribes and protected by them, but with the passing of time they almost entirely lost their subservient status, and attained their independence. The Saadi, however, still consider themselves superior in lineage.

In Fezzan the nomadic tribes (mentioned earlier) have essentially uniform structure despite the race differences. The settled population, which is composed of a mixture of Arabs, Berbers, Ethiopians and negroes, live a sedentary life in small villages and depend almost

¹ Enciclopedia Italiana, Milano, 1934, Vol. X, pp. 421-422.

² Loc. cit.

wholly on agriculture. The entire population is Moslem in religion and speaks Arabic although some retain their Berber or Sudanese language. The settled inhabitants of Fezzan have classified themselves into two categories, according to their actual or supposed origin: Ahrar, or free men, and Shuashuna, or descendants of slaves. In actuality this class consciousness is not strongly emphasized today and hence the population may be classified into broad categories according to their standard of living: the wealthy class which formerly derived a good profit from the caravan trade between the Sudan and the coast and at present owns most of the cultivated plots, and the workers, who cultivate the plots, often for the middle class, working under customary contracts which render their standard of living very low.¹

Inhabitants of the Coastal Towns and Oases

The towns and oases of the coast are inhabited by an essentially sedentary population, whose base is Arab. In the large towns the Arabs are mixed with Berbers, Jews, negroes, Maltese, Italians, Turks and various European elements. In some cases these elements remain distinct (as in the case of the Jews) and no fusion takes place; but in general the conditions of town life tend to break down racial animosity and consciousness and a mixed breed arises. As a result the distinction between Arabs and Berbers

¹Annual Report of the French Government on Fezzan, p. 11.

is hardly apparent in such towns as Tripoli, Bengazi and Misurata.¹

The negroes remain for the most part comparatively pure, inhabiting separate quarters outside the towns. The coastal oases are fertile and, in Tripoli, well watered; in consequence they provide good centers for sedentary Arab population, as well as being visited for harvesting purposes by nomad and semi-nomadic tribes of the desert. Each oasis is divided into small holdings where the Arab owners live in huts on their land and have some degree of civil life.

Inhabitants of the Desert Oases

The population of the oases is much more mixed than that of the northern plateaus and steppes. Inter-marriage between Arabs, Berbers and negroes has been so common for such a long time that a fairly homogeneous type of population,² uniting certain characteristics of each of these races, has established itself. In general this population is physically poor and unhealthy owing to under-nourishment and to the unhygienic conditions which prevail in these oases.

This population lives partly on agriculture of an intensive kind and partly on caravan traffic.

¹Coon, op. cit., p. 475.

²Ibid., p. 468.

Nomads of the Sahara

The Tuareg: The name Tuareg is applied by the Arabs to the aboriginal Berber tribes. By themselves these tribes are called Imashagh, a name which can be traced into remote antiquity as the designation of an influential Libyan tribe. The Tuareg is a conglomeration of nomadic tribes which dominates the caravan routes and cultivates a few plots of land lying between the Libyan desert and Rio de Oro. Despite the vastness of their territory, the Tuareg are not numerous, since their habitat will support but a small population. There are three classes: two free groups, the Ihaggren, or nobles, and the Imrad or tribute-paying tribesmen, and the slaves.¹

The social system of the Tuareg is a finely balanced response to their environmental needs, and resembles that of the northern Arabian Bediun in its high evaluation of self-reliance and independence of action. Despite the close association between the Tuareg and the negroes, who preceded them in the Sahara and with whom they are in close contact, the noble class has to a large extent preserved its freedom from negroid admixture. The physical type of the non-negroid Tuareg nobles is one of tall men with slight build. The color of the skin is brunet-white and the eyes are dark brown. The hair is black and straight. More negro strain is noticeable in the lower Tuareg classes which are more numerous than the pure nobles and in

¹Ibid., pp. 471-473.

certain ways they seem to show a cultural relation with the Sudanese negroes.¹

The Tuaregs speak the Tamakek dialect of the Berber language, the purest surviving form of that language, and are divided into four main tribes or confederacies, each of which appears to have its own head or chief. They have become largely Arabized in manner and customs since the adoption of Islam, and use Arabic for all religious and council purposes. Women occupy an important position among them and have considerable freedom.

The Tebu (Tubu, Tudu, Teda) are another branch of the aboriginal Hamitic race of Northern Africa, but it is not clear how far they should be called Berbers. They show greater affinities with the eastern Hamites of the Egyptian region than with the Tuareg or Tripoli Berbers. This has sometimes been explained by an admixture of negro blood, but there is no proof that such an admixture exists.

Their home and major center is in the Tibesti Mountains, southeast of Tummo. But they have spread over a large part of Fezzan as well as the whole of Kufra, and play, in the Libyan desert and eastern Sahara, much the same role of pastoralism as do the Tuareg in the central and western Sahara.

Language and Religion

Language is the most important element that enters into the

¹Ibid., p. 473.

complex of any ethnographic group. In general it serves as a common bond and brings peoples together in a community of ideas. Thus it strengthens the national sentiment. Religion is another important element that should be given consideration in the political-geographical study of any political unit, for it affects the ethnographic groups in different ways and consequently enters into the fabric of the state in an intimate fashion.

For the purposes of geopolitical evaluation, the universal language of Libya is Arabic. It is spoken by the overwhelming majority of the people, and is the language of religion, commerce and learning. However, other languages are spoken in some areas. Remnants of the old Berber language are still used in some isolated areas in the Jebel region and in some oases like Jalo and Augila.¹ Nevertheless, even there Arabic is used in day-to-day life and therefore people are bilingual, for the Berber language is a spoken one only and has no written form. Thus Arabic is the only language which is spoken and understood by all and hence can be used in schools, markets and Mosques. The Italian language is spoken by the Italian minority; however, the younger generation of the Italian group are bilingual, for they need to speak Arabic in order to deal with the majority of the population. The Jewish community is Arabized linguistically and Arabic is considered their native tongue.

The element of religion is of great importance in a political

¹Pritchard, op. cit., p. 47.

geographical evaluation of Libya, for the present backward state of the people is coupled with the absence of other social or political organizations which would share with religion the responsibility of guiding the people. Religion has therefore become the only institution with strong influence upon the spiritual, cultural and political life of the Libyan people.

Libya enjoys the advantage of having one common religion, for 97 percent of the people are Moslem sunnites and belong to the Malikiti rite. However, in Cyrenaica, almost the entire population follow the Sanusite Order. Also there is a small group of Berbers who live around Zuara, Nalut and in the Jebel Nefusa, who follow the schismatic Ibadite rite.¹ However, they do not constitute a religious minority, as the difference is very insignificant and does not involve the principle of the Mohammedan faith. Adherents of Christianity include the Italian minority and the few other European inhabitants. The majority of these belong to the Roman Catholic church. It is from this Italian minority that trouble might be expected in the future.

¹In North Africa this name is used to designate a branch of the Khawarij, an Islamic sect founded in the seventh century. It was introduced into this region in the eighth century, and developed rapidly amongst the Berbers, till it became the national doctrine, which served as a pretext for the struggle between the African and the orthodox Arabs. In these days they are still found in relatively compact groups at Wargla, Mzab, Jebel Nefusa and in the Island of Jerba. They have fairly frequent intercourse with the Ibadites of Oman and of Zanzibar. Naturally the Ibadites object energetically to the name of heretics which the orthodox sects give them. They claim that they alone have preserved the pure doctrine of Islam.

The Jewish faith lingered for a long time in Libya, but it seems that the Jewish problem has solved itself through the migration of the Libyan Jews to Israel.

Analysis of the human elements shows that Libya has a relatively homogenous population and represents ethnographically a single group, despite its divergent past. This population speaks one language, practises one religion, has a common cultural and historical background and finally shares common economic interests. All these are factors which provide the Libyan state with a strong human basis for national unity, without which a modern state cannot be established. However, this advantage which the human elements provide to the state is facing a serious challenge, one posed by the backward stage of technology. Approximately 90 percent of the population is illiterate. At the present time only 25 percent of the children of school age can go to school, hygienic conditions are inadequate and the standard of living is very low. In general there is a shortage of trained, capable men in all fields of culture, politics and economic life. This presents a great handicap to the progress of the new state. Only outside technical help (through the UNO) can relieve the new state of this burden, which is entirely too heavy for her to carry alone.

CHAPTER VI

ECONOMIC FOUNDATIONS

In the geopolitical evaluation of a state, a study of its wealth and economic potential is primary since these, to a considerable extent, will determine not only its strength or weakness but also will determine whether or not the state is able to satisfy the demands of its economic structure or whether it will have to depend largely upon help from other states. The results of such a study should do much to indicate the viability of the state in question.

Agriculture

The soils of northern Libya are generally poor both in organic matter and plant nutrients.¹ Light sandy soils 30 to 40 feet deep predominate along the coast of Tripolitania; these soils retain some moisture even in the driest years and are comparatively well suited to dry farming. Heavier soils predominate in the Jeffara and on the Jebel, where desert sand, carried by winds, is mixed with reddish clay. Though comparatively richer in plant nutrients than the sandy soils, these soils cannot be worked in dry years. Here and there are outcrops of limestone and, along the coast, marine dunes and salty marshes that are wholly unsuited for agriculture. The

¹U. S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agriculture, Vol. VIII, p. 159.

tablelands of Cyrenaica have Terra Rossa, alternating with soils of the Mediterranean regions. On the upper plateau Terra Rossa alternates with a gray-black clay, rich in humus; to the east the latter forms a continuous cover, whereas in the west it has been carried into the lowlands. East of Bengazi lies a bank of limestone, interrupted in a few sheltered spots by isles of Terra Rossa. In general the soils of Cyrenaica are much heavier than those of Tripolitania, and in the broad peninsula between Bengazi and Derna, which constitutes the main part of the agricultural area, they consist mainly of heavy, red loams.¹

Beyond any doubt water is the most critical factor in Libyan agriculture. From time immemorial the inhabitants of Northern Libya have been confronted with the problem of insuring an adequate water supply for man, beast and crops. There are virtually no perennial water courses, and the conservation of surface water is difficult because of the nature and irregularity of the precipitation and the structure and porosity of the soils. The Romans and Greeks made numerous attempts to conserve surface water, as witness the ruins of many of their conservation works in the forms of dams, weirs and cisterns, which stud the plains and the highlands. At the present time more than 160 springs contribute materially to the water supply of the highlands of Cyrenaica; the most important of these, whose waters are carried to the western settlements

¹B. A. Keen, The Agricultural Development of the Middle East, London, 1946, p. 11.

through a 124-mile aqueduct, is the fountainhead of Ain Mara, on the eastern part of Jebel Akhdar. Tripolitania has but few springs; somewhat exceptional is the spring of Tauorga, with a flow of 925 gallons per second.¹

The agricultural economy of Tripolitania is based upon underground waters, and gives this section a comparative advantage over Cyrenaica. An upper, pressureless watertable, lying at a depth of 16 to 130 feet from the surface is exploited in the oases through 30,000 wells. To increase the water supply, the Italians have drilled some 800 wells, tapping a second, somewhat lower watertable.² A third watertable lying at a depth of no less than 1200 feet, has been discovered between the Tunisian border and Homs. The high mineral content of this forbids its utilization for drinking purposes. The amounts of underground water available for further agricultural development are considerable, and Italian engineers who surveyed the country are optimistic about the future.³ However, the complexity of the problems of water use and supply calls for careful consideration and planning before water development can be embarked upon. Underground water supplies are known to exist in sufficient quantities for human use and even for agricultural

¹U. S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agriculture, Vol. VIII, 1944, p. 161.

²Ibid., p. 162.

³British Military Administration, Survey of Land Resources in Tripolitania, Tripoli, 1945, pp. 99-100.

development in many regions in Libya, such as the coastal plain, the Jeffara and the Jebel regions in both Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. However, the problem is to obtain sufficient quantities as cheaply as possible, so that the agricultural development can be built on a sound economic basis. This economic factor, therefore, limits the exploitable underground waters to shallow wells or artesian wells from which water can be obtained cheaply.

Note should be made that in many regions this underground water has a high mineral content; that its extensive use for irrigation might involve some damage to soils, and thus might lower agricultural use and productivity.

In an examination of economic factors, the use of the land is primary, for on the land and inland waters man started his first economic enterprise.

In a political geographical study it is necessary only to emphasize the fact that agriculture is still the major occupation of the Libyan people and will continue to be so since nature has endowed this country with meager resources beyond those of the land.

Historical evidence shows that the present systems of land use in Libya are largely the result of political and social instability. Failure to maintain the high level of agriculture attained by the Greeks and the Romans has been due not to important changes of climate, but mainly to a change from sedentary to nomadic agriculture brought about by lack of security.

Unlike the Greeks in Cyrenaica, who were interested in both agriculture and commerce, the Phoenicians in Tripolitania were interested only in safeguarding their trade and trade routes. They took little interest in the agriculture, though they did introduce the olive and some other fruit trees into the coastal plain, and maintained small farms and gardens around their cities. However, their successors, the Carthaginians, as their trade was gradually suppressed by the Romans, paid more attention to agriculture. The second Punic War (218-201 B.C.) exerted great influence upon agricultural development, since by it Carthage both lost her fleet and her commerce, and thus was forced to turn her attention to developing the land resources.¹ Pastoral industries gave way to more intensive land use in those areas where soils and climate permitted. The process however was a long and arduous one, and the change took place slowly.

This development was achieved by the principal families of Carthage, who acquired large properties of land and developed them with their own capital. Thus they assumed the role of absentee landlords, the work being done by tenant farmers who employed slaves.² That the production was considerable is evidenced by the anxiety of the Roman landlords over African competition in their own markets.

¹M. Rostovtzeff, A History of the Ancient World, Vol. II, Oxford, 1927, pp. 68-69.

²Eugene Albertini, L'Afrique Romaine, Algerier, 1937, p. 28.

When the Romans occupied Tripolitania, agriculture was well developed. The Romans needed cereals, so it was not surprising that they brought considerable pressure to bear upon their African territories to increase production. It is very doubtful whether wheat was ever exported from Tripolitania, since the large cities probably consumed all the wheat that could be produced locally. The Roman influence, however, was felt by the inhabitants of Libya in the increased use of land for cereals and horses in contrast to the earlier mixed agriculture of the Carthaginians.¹ The reason for the Roman disinterest in the olive and vine, apart from their need for wheat, was the inferior quality of the Tripolitanian olive and wine as compared to those of Italy, Greece and Spain. Wheat was particularly good and the cost of production low. As a result the planting of vines was severely restricted and in some cases existing vineyards were destroyed to allow greater acreage for wheat.² Under the Romans agricultural land continued to be owned by absentee landlords.³ Much was done by the Romans to arrest soil erosion: masonry walls were built across the valleys; dams and reservoirs were constructed for the storage of water.

The downfall of the Roman Empire and the ensuing Vandal

¹Ibid., pp. 29-30.

²Ibid., p. 30.

³Rostovtzeff, op. cit., p. 294.

occupation of Tripolitania had a devastating effect upon its agriculture. Farms were ruined and trees fell either through old age or to the woodcutter's axe. By the eve of the Arab invasion agriculture was in serious decline. The long struggle of the Arab invaders with the native population and later the invasion of Spain, left the Arab rulers of North Africa little time to cope with the economic conditions in these territories. Invasion by the Beni Hillal and the Beni Suleim tribes in the eleventh century played the final part in destroying the last traces of ancient prosperity. Thus nomadic life developed once again and sedentary agriculture declined still further. Despite all this, the coastal oases and the Jebel area continued to lead a prosperous agricultural and commercial life.

During the Ottoman rule no improvements in agriculture were introduced, since the Turks had sufficient troubles elsewhere to distract their attention from improving the economic conditions in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica.

When the Italians took over the territory in 1911 a considerable proportion of the population were peasants and farmers living in villages along the coastal plain and in settlements on the plateaus, where both dry farming and irrigated agriculture was being practised. In 1924 the Fascist regime in Italy embarked upon schemes of colonization and development in Libya, and during the next 25 years the Italians showed that the land was capable, although at a high cost, of producing and flourishing as it had

in the past. The modern settlements are distributed like oases in the same types of country that the Carthaginians and the Romans had farmed. Large sums of money were spent on water and land development. However, the advantage of this agricultural development was confined mainly to the Italian settlers. The natives and their agricultural pursuits benefitted but little. Under the British Military Administration the status quo was maintained and no significant change was introduced.

The productive land in Tripolitania is estimated to be about 10,000,000 hectares,¹ of which 8,000,000 are grazing land and are not considered suitable for any other purpose. Of the remaining 2,000,000 hectares, about 400,000 are devoted to sedentary farming. However, this land is by no means fully developed. Shifting cereal cultivation by Arabs is found throughout the remaining 1,600,000 hectares.²

Sedentary Farming

The area suitable for cultivation and not dependent upon seasonal rainfall, is restricted to the coastal zone of the Jefara Plain. Water is obtained from wells. The survey of land resources made by the British Military Administration 1944-45 gives a total

¹A hectare is equal to 2.47 acres.

²All figures taken from the Four Power Report on Libya, p. 29.

area of 750,000 hectares suitable for sedentary farming in Tripolitania. Of this only 400,000 hectares are so utilized at present.¹ This area produces dates, olives, fruits, grapes and vegetables. Shifting cultivation is practised by the Arabs wherever soil and rainfall permit, and where underground water is too deep for permanent agriculture. Barley is the chief product of this type of agriculture and the main productive areas are the vast wadis to the south of the hills. These wadis flush two or three times a year, and the land is sown immediately after flooding.

Grazing

Areas of lesser rainfall and a deeper and less certain underground water supply are used for grazing. These are principally south of the hills. Utilization for this purpose, is, however, severely restricted by the availability of drinking water. At present these areas can only be grazed during the rainy season.

In Cyrenaica approximately 4,000,000 hectares, or less than six percent of the total area, are considered productive. About 1,400,000 hectares of land average as much as 12 inches of rain annually.² The rest of the territory, except for the oases, is arid and no systematic farming is possible. Sedentary farming in

¹British Military Administration, Survey of Land Resources in Tripolitania, Tripoli, 1945, p. 9.

²Four Power Report on Libya, Section III, p. 20.

Cyrenaica occupies only a small area.

In 1939 the total state land reserves including land purchased or expropriated, and land confiscated was 629,155 hectares.¹ These lands were situated mainly on the plateau of Jebel Akhdar and on the coastal plain, the only areas suitable for colonization and dependable agriculture. Most of the remaining lands are freely used by the native population, who lead a nomadic or semi-nomadic life. These lands are normally used as pasture and are in fact communal lands, strictly divided between tribes according to customary law.

Cereals have been and will continue to be cultivated extensively in Libya. Barley and wheat are the main cereal crops. However, barley is much more reliable, since it withstands the climate and poverty of the soils better than wheat. Both its capacity to mature quickly and the quality of the straw make it a more valuable crop than wheat. Cultivation is almost exclusively Arab. The average annual yield for the whole country is estimated to be 65,000 tons,² produced from about 330,000 hectares. Wheat is second with about 15,000 to 20,000 tons a year from a cultivated area of approximately 40,000 hectares. Wheat was largely grown by Italians since they were accustomed to raising it at home. They also grew small quantities of oats.

¹Four Power Report on Libya, Section III, p. 20.

²Ibid., p. 30.

Whereas the barley crop in an average year leaves a surplus for export of about 10,000 tons, the wheat crop is below local requirements, which were estimated to be between 50,000 and 60,000 tons. The grain balance of the country, therefore, has been generally adverse. The deficits must be met by way of import.¹

The olive is one of the most important crops of Libya, especially in Tripolitania; it is well adapted to the soils and low rainfall, it resists wind and high temperature and its cultivation is relatively simple. There are about 3,570,000 olive trees planted on about 310,000 hectares and these produce about 3,000 tons of oil annually. A large proportion of the trees planted by Italian concessionaires and colonists are not yet in full production. Estimates indicate that the oil yield will reach about 12,000 tons when all the trees become fruitful, and this will mean leaving a surplus of 8,000 to 9,000 tons above local need. The date is the principal fruit of the country, and a staple food of the native population. Palm trees are found throughout most of the country. The quality of Libyan dates is not as high as that of Tunisian dates, probably due to the less favorable climatic conditions. The number of date-palms could be increased. The area is suitable in climate, particularly the regions surrounding the salt marshes, where other crops are unable to tolerate the salt water. Such regions as the Towarga and the western coastal region near Zuara are suitable for

¹British Military Administration, Survey of Land Resources in Tripolitania, Tripoli, 1945, p. 130.

the growing of dates of low grade which can be used for the distillation of alcohol and for stock feed. The saturation point has by no means been reached in respect to palms throughout the rest of the country. Viniculture is associated almost exclusively with the Italian colonists.¹ Wine is produced but it is not of good quality.

Other crops of varying importance are almonds, figs and citrus. All types of garden vegetables are common and there is always a surplus for export.

Until recently livestock have been the agricultural mainstay of the inhabitants of Libya. Today, livestock continue to hold the primary position in Cyrenaica, and even in Tripolitania the value of animal livestock production was greater than the value of all the remaining agricultural products combined in the period, 1931-35. The 1936 drought conditions were responsible for a considerable decrease in stock numbers, and World War II brought about not only the slaughtering of many animals, but also the temporary stimulation of cereal growing to meet the local demand.²

In an assessment of the potential of the country, it seems justifiable to take into consideration the implication of all possible avenues of development insofar as they relate to the

¹At the present time there are more than 45 million vines in Libya, most of them in Tripolitania.

²British Military Administration, Survey of Land Resources in Tripolitania, Tripoli, 1945, p. 75.

livestock industry. A number of factors would seem to indicate the wisdom of developing the country's agriculture around livestock. These factors are: 1) the price livestock products command on world markets; 2) the scope for increased development of livestock in Libya; 3) the closeness of the territory to Europe and its location on a major trade route; and 4) the favorable geographic conditions of the country (climate and relief). The sedentary farming areas and the vast grazing areas could be organized as a unit to the mutual benefit of both.

The major portion of the livestock is in the hands of the Arabs, who adhere closely to the traditions and methods which have been handed down from antiquity.

In the past most of the livestock was probably reared under purely nomadic conditions, whereas today only a small portion of the flocks live in this manner. The livestock of the semi-nomads are fed in the sedentary farming areas of the oases and Jebels during the hot dry summer; in winter they migrate to the semi-desert. The bulk of the country's livestock is maintained in this way. However, certain livestock is always kept in the sedentary farming areas. These include cows and some draft animals.¹

¹
Ibid., p. 78.

NUMBER OF LIVESTOCK IN LIBYA

	Sheep	Goats	Cattle	Camels	Asses	Horses
Tripolitania	367,300	295,800	33,700	61,900	23,900	8,900
Cyrenaica	509,587	408,700	35,900	24,499	15,900	4,000
Total	876,887	704,500	69,600	86,399	39,800	12,900

These data are taken from Foreign Agriculture,
Vol. VIII, 1944, p. 165, which in turn were compiled
from Annuario Statistico della Agricoltura Italiana
(1936-38).

To give a complete picture of the agricultural situation in Libya, it is necessary to discuss briefly Italian farming and the Italian mass colonization program. At the beginning of World War II, there were in Libya close to 6,000 Italian families (50,000 persons) settled on newly reclaimed agricultural lands covering some 1,467,000 acres. About 250,000 acres of this land were given in concession - between 1923 and 1933 - to large agricultural companies who, with government aid, settled and developed the land entrusted to them. A majority of these companies (about 400 of them) hold the land in perpetual lease and are cultivating them on an industrial basis. Through them something over 1,000 Italian families and an equal number of native families have been employed for agricultural purposes.¹

This type of agricultural development, while successful as a farming venture, soon proved inadequate as a means for transferring large masses of Italians to Libya and in utilizing to the greatest extent possible, the territory's undeveloped agricultural resources. The Italian peasant farmer is at his best when he tills his own soil and at the same time builds for the future security of his family. As a result, his interest in transferring himself and his family to Libya for the purposes of employment only, was not enough to create a large demand among Italian peasants for the opportunity of migrating to the colony. Furthermore, the limited financial

¹Martin Moore, Fourth Shore, London, 1940, p. 76.

resources of the industrialized agricultural concessionaires excluded the possibility of their developing certain social and economic conditions and providing the public services necessary in a land hitherto almost totally devoid of these things.

Recognizing such limitations, the Italian government set out to overcome them. The Balbo mass colonization plan was the result. Through it more than 3,600 Italian families (about 35,000 persons) were settled on a total of 325,000 acres of reclaimed lands. Of this total, a small number (about 600 families) were settled during the experimental period (1933-37) and the remainder, after the Balbo plan was placed in full operation in 1938-39.¹

Provisions were made to keep this plan in operation until all of Libya's lands which had been or might be converted to agricultural usefulness had been settled by the greatest possible number of Italian families. Through this plan, the Italian government hoped that some 30,000 families (about 300,000 persons) could be accommodated within a period of ten years.²

The Balbo mass colonization and development plans for Libya were based upon the social, economic, corporative and political principles of the Fascist regime in Italy. While it is true that the execution of these plans was entrusted to two organizations whose legal status was similar to that of public utility concerns,

¹ Italian Library of Information, Libya, New York, 1940, p. 63.

²Ibid.

it should be remembered that they were both supported and controlled by the government. Therefore, the whole of the undertaking should be considered as a government and not as a private enterprise.

The first phase of this program (1938-39) involved the preparation of 300 farms, and the support of these until each should become self-supporting. The equipping of the farms included living quarters (five-room farm houses), barns, agricultural implements, wells, seeds, and other necessities of a farm. The maintenance provided for public services (roads and other means of communication, insurance, social services, financing, etc.), land reclamation and other improvements involved in converting barren wastes into active well-equipped communities.¹ The Institute for Libyan colonization and the National Institute for Social Welfare were given 60,000,000 lire by the government for the purchase of necessary lands, rights of grazing, etc. All expenditures for public works were sustained by the government.² Expenditures involved in the

¹Ibid., p. 64.

²The total expenditures for carrying out the first phase of the Balbo mass colonization and development plan were as follows:

Part I 1938		
Government	110,000,000	Lire
Colonization Institutes	295,888,500	"
Total	405,888,500	"
Part II 1939		
Government	255,000,000	"
Colonization Institutes	285,000,000	"
Total	540,000,000	"
Grand Total	945,888,000	"

transformation of lands to fully equipped farms were sustained by the two Institutes so engaged, operating on a non-profit basis.

For the more than 3,000 farms so prepared during the first phase, about 321,000 acres of land were put into cultivation. The farms were grouped into 26 agricultural centers for the Italians and ten for the natives, almost all of them situated along the coast and near the larger cities.¹ Each center comprised varying numbers of farms and various public buildings.

The area of each farm varied according to the availability of water, amount of irrigation possible, climatic conditions and the crops best suited to the soil.²

Three main types of Italian farming are recognized in Libya. The first, found on the outskirts of urban centers, is essentially based upon electric powered irrigation. It consists of the production of vegetables, citrus and deciduous fruits, together with some intensive dairy or poultry farming. Some cereals are raised for household consumption. Farming practises and techniques do not differ greatly from those of Italian farmers in the coastal region of southern Italy. Secondly, on the Jebels, the Italians have developed a typically Mediterranean agriculture.

¹Italian Library of Information, Libya, New York, 1940, p. 65.

²Ibid., p. 66.

The area of irrigated farms is 37 acres; the area of semi-irrigated farms is 62.75 acres, about 15 irrigated; the area of dry farming is 125 acres in the drier region and 75 acres in the rainier region (Jebel).

In the more favored spots most of the land is in wheat, alternating with fallow or a horsebean crop; the remainder is in olives and almonds. In the less favored areas, olives, figs and grapes, the last for production of alcohol and a poor wine, dominate and all field crops become secondary enterprises.¹

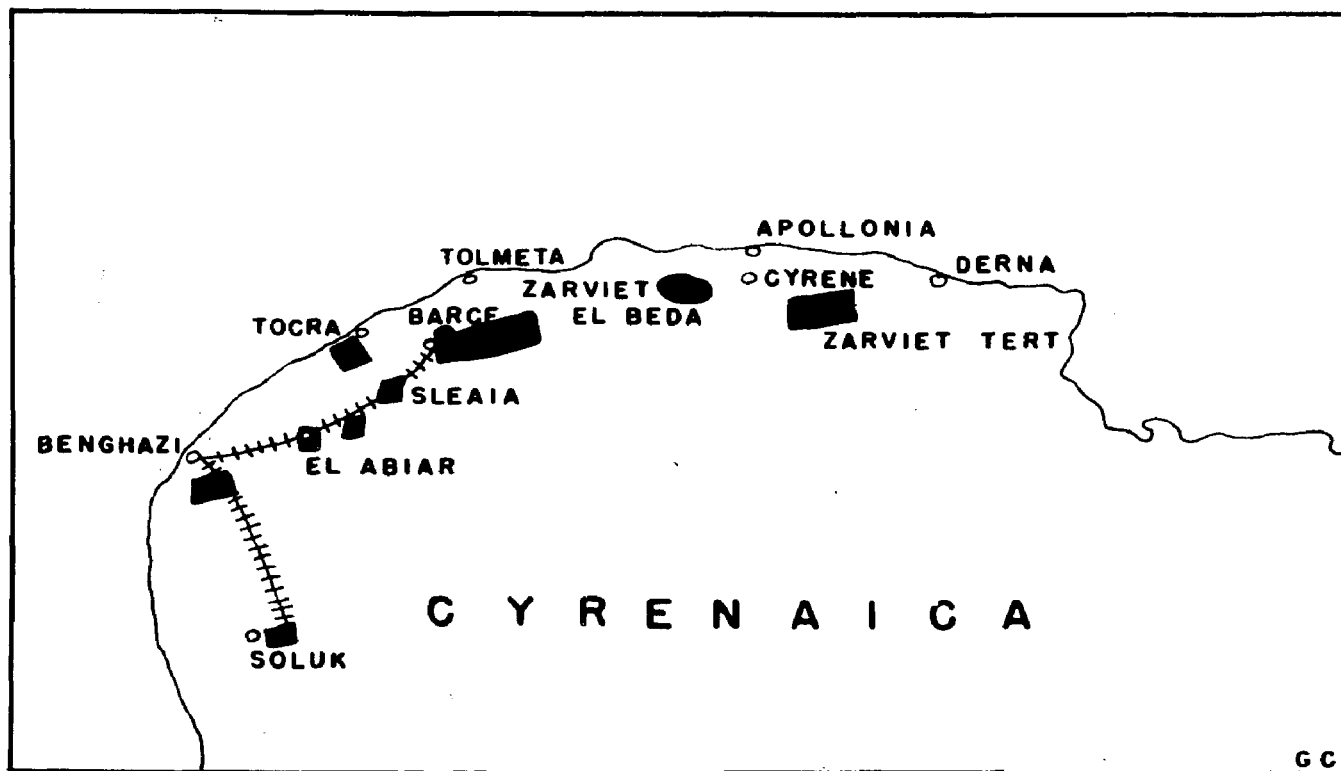
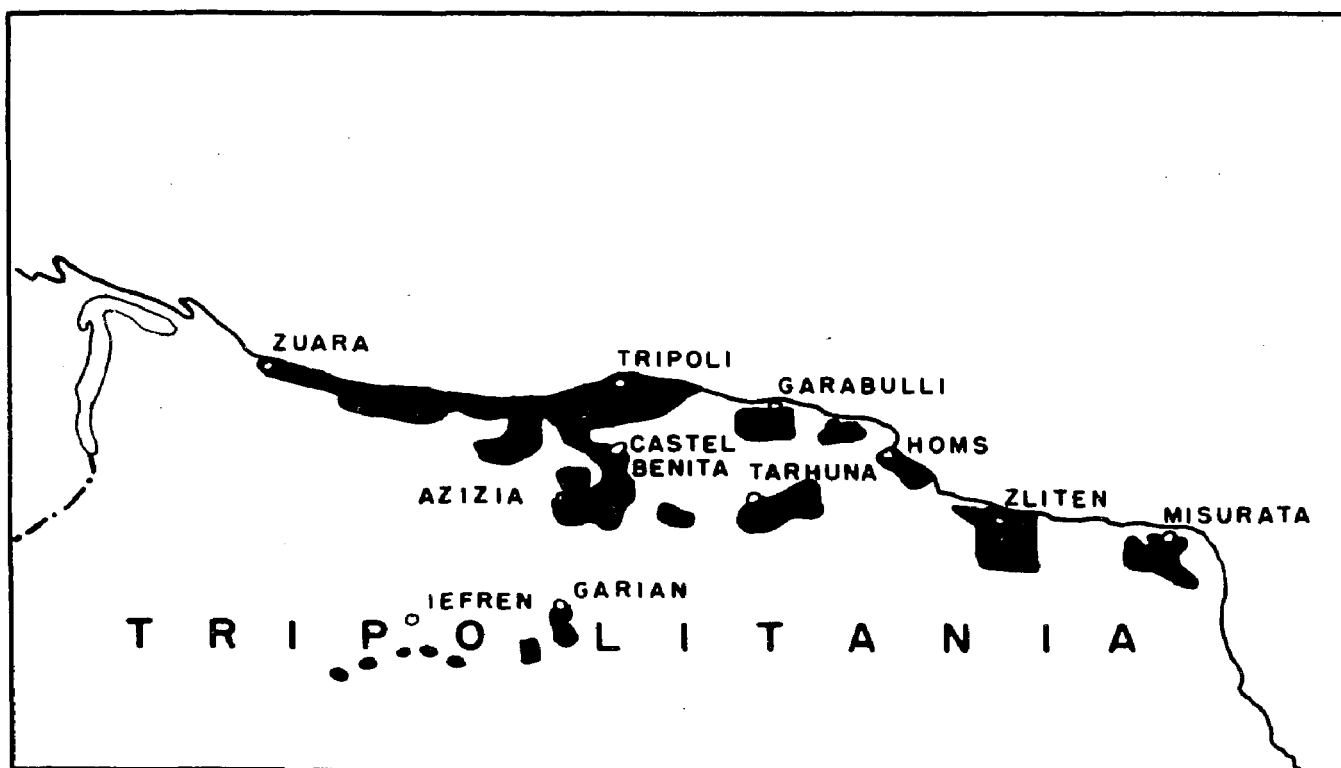
The third type of farming is found in the reclaimed steppes where the water supply does not allow the cultivation of very demanding crops. Only those plants can be grown that require watering at planting time (light tobacco and flax for seeds), or those such as early soft wheat, that can be rescued from the drought by means of an emergency overhead system of irrigation.

Practically all the Italian settlements were located within the zones of higher rainfall. (Figure 12). In 1938 the Italian lands farmed accounted for about 15 percent of the total productive land in northern Libya.² In the same year the Italians produced about 28 percent of the total production of all agricultural crops in Libya.³

¹U. S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agriculture, Vol. VIII, 1944, p. 166.

²The Italians produced 300,000 quintals of wheat, barley, oats and corn, and 157,000 quintals of dates, olives, almonds, citrus grapes and tobacco.

³The Italian livestock in 1937 amounted to five percent of the total for the territory.



GC

ITALIAN SETTLEMENTS

FIG. 12

As a result of the war, the Italian farmers almost completely abandoned their farms in Cyrenaica and after the war were not allowed for political reasons to go back to them.¹ These farms were either leased to the Arab farmers or were run directly by the British Military Administration on a wage basis. Since most of these lands were originally confiscated by the Italian government, either from their owners who took part in the revolution against the Italians, or from the Sanusi lodges, it would be natural to expect that such lands will be turned over to their original proprietors. The few remaining farms, which were originally government land, should be distributed to the landless peasants. This would settle the problem of the abandoned Italian farms in Cyrenaica.

Industry

Industrial possibilities in Libya are definitely limited. The country lacks essential mineral resources (coal, iron, oil), local capital and skilled labor. There are few if any possibilities for hydroelectric power; transportation is poorly developed. For the present, and probably for a long time to come, manufacturing will be confined to the native crafts and to those small industrial enterprises that require a minimum investment and that can utilize local raw materials.

¹E. A. Keen, The Agricultural Deveopment of the Middle East, London, 1946, p. 102.

Deposits of common salt, potash and magnesium salts (in the Bu Kemash region) can be exploited successfully and prepared for export, especially to supply Italy's vast chemical industry, which badly needs these raw materials. The vast olive tree plantations which have come into being during the last 20 years are already beginning to bear fruit. These trees have been found to be the best suited to Libya's climate and every effort should be made in the future to encourage an ever-increasing cultivation of them. Already small olive oil presses have sprung up in the larger urban centers and there is every reason to expect that with the increased production of olives, the olive-oil industry will grow.

The soap industry, which has existed in Libya for a long time and depends upon vegetable oil and animal fats supplied locally, can be improved and enlarged to meet, at least, the local consumption.

A considerable fishing industry flourishes along the Mediterranean coast, especially around Tripoli, Homs, Bengazi, Derna and Tobruk. The principal catch, tuna fish, is the largest in the Mediterranean waters. Sardine is also caught in these waters. Several canneries use the local olive oil for fish canning. The canned fish are usually exported to Italy and some other Mediterranean countries. By using large, modern trawlers, there is a prospect that the amount of the catch can be increased greatly.¹ This, apart from

¹Four Power Report on Libya, section III, p. 34.

providing an additional source of food to the population, would supply the raw material for an important canning industry which in turn would supply the country with an extra income from the export of canned fish.

Sponge fishing off the coast of Cyrenaica could also be enlarged and linked to the fishing industry to offer a means of livelihood to the local fishermen.

With the future development of the livestock industry, there are bright prospects of establishing a tanning and leather industry. Already several small tanneries and shoe factories, built in the Italian period, are in operation. However, their capacity and investment are limited and their products are not enough to meet the local demands. A meat packing industry could also be established with a good chance of success.

Tobacco is raised and cigarettes are manufactured locally for home consumption.

There are a number of small industries, such as building materials, flour milling, alcoholic and soft beverages, etc., all of them operating on a very limited scale and intended to supply only the local market.

Native handcraft industries produce articles mainly for local use. In the city of Misurata and its environs, there is a considerable rug-weaving industry. Tanning and dyeing leather and saddle-making are also important. Excellent gold, silver, metal and wood work still occupy important places among the native industries. No

more than six workers are employed, however, in any single handcraft establishment.

Libya is by no means an industrial country and will never be in the future an industrial country in the sense understood in the industrialized countries of the world, since she lacks the essential elements which are indispensable to the establishment of industry. Poor in raw material, she lacks capital and skilled labor and her markets are limited. All these factors would make the success of her industry difficult of attainment. However, despite these shortcomings, there is a prospect for a few light industries: olive-oil processing, soap-making, building materials, fish-canning and leather. These with only small investments and a moderate amount of skilled labor, could be established on an economic basis and could utilize the local raw materials and supply local demands.

Foreign Trade

Prior to British occupation, the two main features of the country's foreign trade were the constant adverse trade balance and the high proportion of import and export trade with Italy, which resulted in a large balance in favor of Italy. (Appendix No. 1) These features were the result of the incorporation of Libya into the autarchy of metropolitan Italy. From that country flowed large subsidies to finance the deficit economy. Over one half of the imports from Italy consisted of equipment to serve the Italian

colonization scheme.¹

Even prior to 1934, before Italy engaged in a policy of autarchy, the share of Italy in the foreign trade of Libya was about two-thirds of the country's total foreign trade. This was due mainly to geographical proximity and cheap sea freight, as well as to Italian political influence.

During the British occupation, the gap between imports and exports was considerably reduced and in 1944 and 1946, which were years of good harvest, there was a favorable balance, chiefly because of the export of surplus barley. The reduction in the trade deficit was mainly due to a decrease in imports, particularly of equipment and materials.²

In consequence of the lack of raw materials and industry the inhabitants are dependent on imports for tea, sugar, coffee, flour, motor vehicles, building materials, textiles, oil and all other forms of manufactured goods. In return they export small

¹Four Power Report on Libya, Section III, p. 46.

²Libya imports and exports (£000s):

	<u>Cyrenaica</u>			<u>Tripolitania</u>			
	1944	1945	1946	1944	1945	1946	1947
Imports	283	946	891	542	1704	1409	2324
Exports	203	442	890.5	677	970	1618	1174

These figures were taken from Gray and Silberman, The Fate of Italy's Colonies, London, 1948, p. 52.

quantities of barley, olive oil, hides and skins, wool, live animals, dates, fresh vegetables and sponges.

The stability in foreign trade, which was established by the British Military Administration, was achieved at the cost of a lower volume of imports and exports required for the economic development of the country and, therefore, it must be considered as a temporary measure to be replaced in time by more positive policy.¹ This would mean an increase in local products and the encouraging of exports in order to provide the country with the necessary foreign currency to pay for her overseas purchases.

The political changes brought about by World War II and the disappearance of Italy as a dominant political power in Libya resulted in an important change in the trend of her foreign trade. For instance, while Italy accounted for about 90 percent of Cyrenaica's foreign trade before the war, this trade shrank after 1942 to a negligible proportion. On the other hand the United Kingdom's share in Cyrenaica's import trade rose from less than one percent in the period 1931-36 to 17 percent in 1947.² However, Italy is bound to regain her leading position in Libya's foreign trade once political stability is achieved. Italy's geographical position in the Mediterranean, her proximity to Libya, cheap sea

¹J. C. Gray and L. Silberman, The Fate of Italy's Colonies, London, 1948, p. 53.

²Four Power Report on Libya(Cyrenaica, Section III), p. 34.

freight, past Italian experience, Italy's knowledge of Libyan markets, and the fact that Italy is almost the only country that can supply these markets with cheap commodities and accept Libya's poor agricultural products - all these are factors that give Italy a remarkable advantage in becoming Libya's primary customer. The United Kingdom, due to her political influence in the new state, and Egypt, because of her political as well as geographical position, are bound to have an increasing share of Libya's foreign trade in the future.

Generally speaking, Libya is not a country of merchants, as she was during the Phoenician period, and the per capita value of her trade is relatively low. Thus, foreign trade, although it continues to be an important factor, will not exert a great influence on Libya's relationship with other countries.

Transportation

Transportation is an important element to be considered in the political-geographical evaluation of any political unit. Poor transportation is a great handicap, which, weakening the structure of the state socially and economically in times of peace, can create a tremendous military problem in times of war.

An examination of the transportation problem in Libya does not indicate that the relief of the country presents many handicaps to transportation. Handicaps tend to arise rather from the climatic conditions, which affect the entire economic and social life of the

country and which, in turn, affect transportation indirectly.

The railroad system of Libya is a direct response to the country's geographical conditions. The poverty of the land, due to climatic conditions and to the small population, that lives in small self-sufficient communities scattered over a vast area and separated by wide tracts of empty desert, coupled with the general meagerness of other kinds of natural resources, engenders very little in the way of economic and social activities. Thus the amount of freight and the number of passengers are not sufficient to provide an economic basis on which to operate a large network of railroads. Consequently, the railroad system of Libya is but a loose, disconnected net, built with the sole intention of linking some productive areas of the interior with the coastal cities. (Figure 13) This railroad system not only does not provide Libya with a complete network connecting all parts of the country and moulding it into a single compact unit, but it is bound to create in the future serious military as well as administrative problems for the new state. It will definitely weaken the authority of the central government in the remote parts of the state and promote sectionalism among the people. In order to offset these geographical conditions and to avoid their serious economic, military, social and political consequences, a complete network of railroads will be required, one which will certainly be operated on an uneconomical basis and will therefore need government subsidy. But on account of the economic difficulties this seems impossible of achievement at the present time.

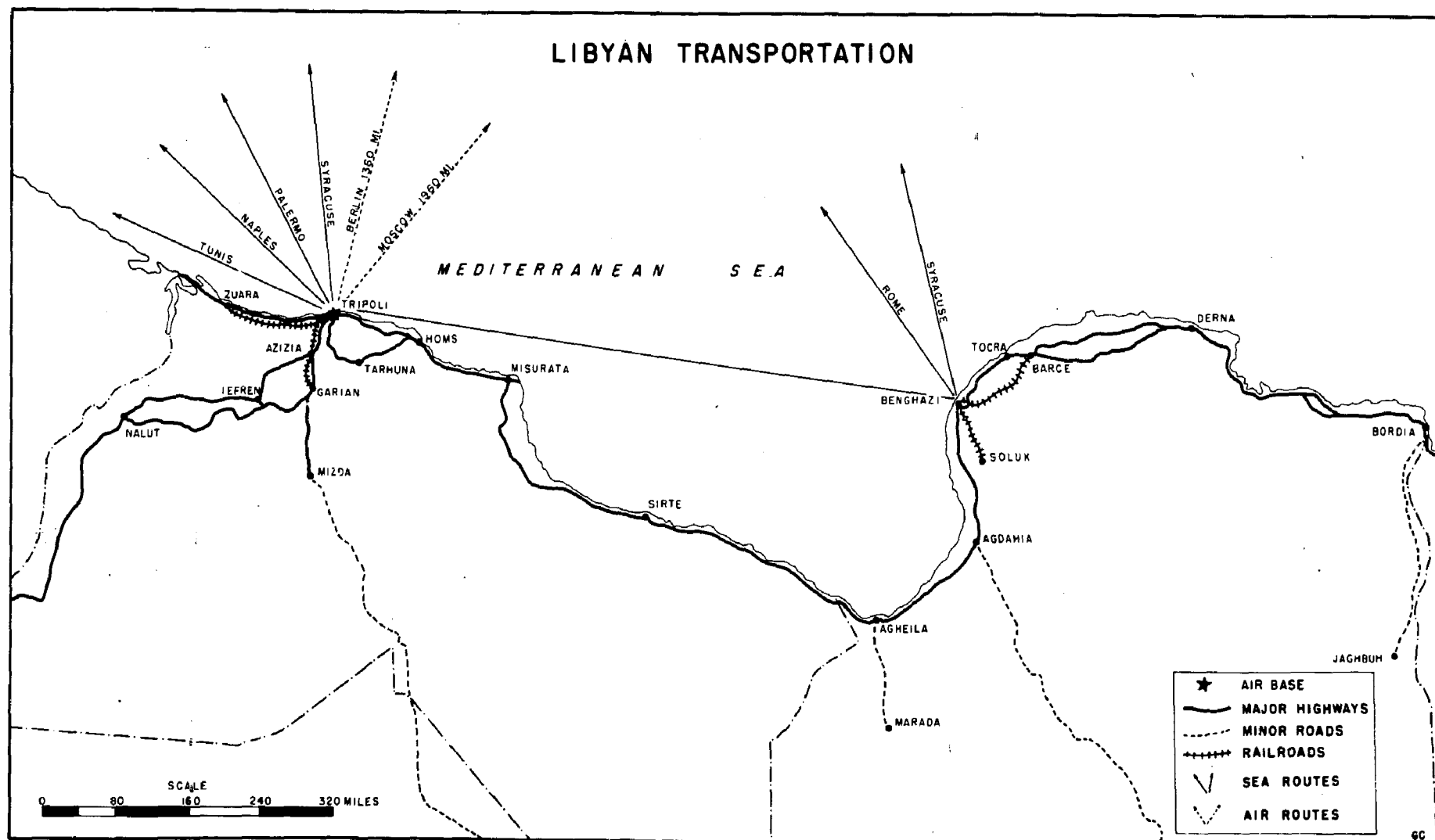


FIG. 13

The present railroad system was constructed by the Italians during their regime. It comprises two parts: First, that of Tripolitania, with a length of 226 kilometers. The longest line is the one which connects Tripoli with Zuara, which is 120 kilometers. The Bibio-Gharian railroad of 78 kilometers is another important line.¹ The second is the Cyrenaican railway, consisting of several single track lines. The most important of these is the line connecting Bengazi with el Merj (108 kilometers), a second is the 55-kilometer line between Bengazi and Saluck.²

Automobile highways could alleviate the difficulties created by the absence of a complete network of railroads. A network of automobile highways offers certain advantages to a country such as Libya. They can be built more easily and with lower investments than a railroad, and would be more cheaply maintained. Although such a highway will not provide the same service as a railroad, it is a good substitute and at the same time offers both a reasonable service and suits the geographical and economic conditions of the country.

During the Italian rule good progress was made in the construction of highways for military and economic purposes. The Italians made a network of highways connecting all cities, oases and other productive areas, the most important of these highways being the stretch along

¹Four Power Report on Libya (Tripolitania Section III), p. 57

²Ibid., (Cyrenaica Section III), p. 39.

the coast from the Tunisian border to the Egyptian frontier.

(Figure 13)

The geographical location of Libya in the central part of the Mediterranean, its position on an important trade route and the length of its coast (1400 miles) provide great advantages to navigation. At the present time most of the Libyan ports are shallow and poorly equipped. Nevertheless their ideal location offers excellent possibilities for greater development in the future. Today the ports of Tripoli and Benghazi are well equipped to accommodate the largest sea-going vessels and possess considerable facilities for handling maritime traffic.

A comprehensive economic plan to rehabilitate Libya by increasing her production, constructing a dependable system of transportation and improving harbor facilities will, certainly, stimulate great maritime activity in the future and attract an increasing number of international vessels to her harbors.

Libya's excellent geographical position, her clear climate, her large areas of relatively level land are all of great value in the development of air transport and will help the country's future as an important air base for traffice between America, Western Europe, the Middle and the Far East.

Potentialities and Possibilities

The place of agriculture in the country's economy is due for an important change. Whereas in the past it was secondary to

trans-Saharan and maritime commerce, it may be expected in the future to assume first importance. In the past the large towns, particularly in Tripolitania, were maintained by commerce, but this eventually declined and the Italians embarked on heavy expenditure in the territory, developing urban life, communications and agriculture without any immediate prospect of significant increase of the country's productive capacity.

During the war and up to the present time economic stability was maintained through heavy war expenditure and favorable rainy seasons, but in the near future, this expenditure will shrink, and many sources of urban employment may close. Prolonged droughts tend to dispel confidence in agriculture and the least attractive form of relief expenditure will appear to be employment on the land. Vision will then be needed to realize that economic stability and independence can only be achieved in this country through agricultural development. It is clear that in its present state agriculture cannot produce enough, and alternative sources of revenue, such as fisheries, tourist trade and industry show little prospect of any rapid or substantial increase. Their capacity to absorb the large number of military and civilian employees who will be seeking new sources of employment when peace conditions are restored is very limited. The problem may then be simply stated. Can agriculture, which henceforth may be regarded as the country's main source of wealth, be developed to the extent of absorbing all those whose present employment must inevitably

cease, or the change from war to peace conditions, and is the productive capacity of the country sufficient to raise the present standard of its population and enable them to pay their way?

Clearly the first step in the assessment of potentialities must be a consideration of the demands to be met, and the degree of capital expenditure and effort which would be justified to balance those demands. The history of ^{the} territory in question shows something of the balance of demand with land use, which is useful for the interpretation of present-day conditions.

When this country was primarily supported by commerce, the urban centers created a considerable local demand for produce. Under the Phoenicians, this demand stimulated intensive production along the coast and around the cities. Later, under the Carthaginians, the conditions were such as to warrant considerable expense on the development and maintenance of law and order. Under the Romans further extension was still justified by the demands from the wealthy urban population. The fall of Rome severed the connection between this country and the wealth of Europe and threw the territory back to primitive agriculture. Nothing important was done to relieve the situation during the Arab and the Ottoman rule, and even after the Italian occupation and until 1921 conditions were bad. Thereafter political and military considerations led to the recruitment of large local labor and military forces, and later to an influx of Italian colonists.

By heavy capital expenditure on army and construction works,

a strong local demand for produce was created, and the economy of the country was linked with that of Italy. Italian agriculturalists surveyed the country and estimated that sedentary farming could be extended over 4,000,000 hectares in Tripolitania alone. This may be regarded as their assessment of the demand for productive land. They were prepared to spend 2,000 Italian lire to bring poor quality irrigation water to ten hectares of sandy soil and to render these holdings habitable by means of the well-known demographic dwellings and amenities.¹ The incentive must have been indeed great. Obviously this program was decidedly inspired by political and military, but not economic, considerations.

Whereas under the closed economy of the pre-war Italian Empire, prices paid for agricultural commodities were not closely related to those of world markets, the values of these products will probably in the future be determined by world supply and demand.

There is every reason to suppose that a continuation of heavy expenditure on the pre-war scale is not likely, and that this country will have to take a more independent place in world economy than hitherto. Under such changed circumstances how can she pay for the purchase overseas of many necessities which she cannot produce for herself? The lack of alternative sources of wealth and the small scope for the development of local industries indicate

¹British Military Administration, Survey of Land Resources in Tripolitania, Tripoli, 1945, p. 12.

that the burden of producing an exportable surplus at world prices must fall on agriculture.

The values of the different forms of agriculture must therefore be viewed in relation to the values of similar forms of agriculture in other parts of the world; for instance, how does intensive production from ten hectare-irrigated farms costing 200 Italian lire per hectare compare with that of irrigated farms elsewhere in the world? In the first place the cost of Lit.200 per hectare is very high and the irrigation water is neither abundant nor of the best quality. Secondly, the soils and climate are such that Libya can never be regarded, on the basis of her agricultural and irrigation potentialities, as anything but a poor country. With the possible exception of the olive, competition on world markets with irrigated and even dry land crops would be hard indeed.

Wealth and poverty are relative terms. Rich land yields heavily, warrants large capital expenditure and supports a high standard of living. In Libya the yields, low as they are both in relation to labor units and land area units, demand that a high proportion of the country's population be diverted to agriculture, that capital and overhead charges be kept low, and that urban population be limited to the reduced administrative and industrial requirements of the future.¹ In addition, it is necessary to aim

¹Ibid.

at self-sufficiency and independence from all but unavoidable imports.

Nevertheless the territory, unsuited as it is to compete with intensive farms of fertile, well-watered land in Europe, enjoys certain advantages which Europe lacks. In the first place, the land is not mortgaged, save in the small areas of European colonization; the Arab inhabitants of the country have a simple standard of living; and the farming areas constitute a strip of country with good ports on a main sea trade route close to European markets. Conditions are admirably suited to livestock rearing and exportation, and compare favorably with other livestock exporting countries. Heavy yields of forage can be expected from carob, spineless cactus, saltbush and other crops without the aid of irrigation, and the vast area of semi-desert forage is as cheap a form of animal feed as can be found anywhere in the world. Its quality in winter and spring leaves nothing to be desired. There is every reason to suppose that livestock products exported for sale on world markets will be able to compete easily with those of other countries.

The planning of agriculture and development of land resources may therefore be based on the production of local requirements and the development of the export of those farming commodities which may be expected to compete without difficulty on world markets. The natural capabilities of the population must be taken into consideration also. With the exception of sugar, coffee,

tea and cotton goods, the country can supply approximately its own requirements in food and clothing, and every effort must be made to maintain this state of affairs. The choice of export commodities would appear to be limited to livestock products, olive oil and possibly early vegetables, dates and wine. More than seven tenths (7/10) of the area under consideration is semi-desert, and cannot, so far as agriculture is concerned, be expected to yield anything but livestock products. The country lends itself to livestock production. The grazing areas comprise a comparatively narrow strip of some 500 miles along the seaboard, which extends south to about 120 miles in both Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. Facilities for export by sea are good, and animals can be brought on the hoof for marketing without any expensive land transportation costs. The installation of chilling and refrigeration plants at the ports would probably be necessary to deal with surpluses and insure regular supplies for overseas markets. Coupled with these advantages is the fact that the Arab is a shepherd at heart and livestock production is a traditional part of his way of life.

The sedentary farming areas in Tripolitania, situated as they are along the coast and on the cool Jebel, make them eminently suitable for summer feeding of livestock. The extensive grazing areas are all within walking distance of the sedentary farming areas, and as a result, it is possible to apply a system of grazing management mutually beneficial to both.

As an integral part of this general development, a further

two and one half to three million olive trees can be established, and 500,000 more date-palms can be planted. A greater development of vines is uncertain, but this may be classed with other secondary phases of agriculture such as dairying for towns, poultry and speciality crops such as tobacco or henna. None of these is of primary importance to the orientation of the territory's agriculture, and if the basic principles of land use are determined, these minor activities will automatically find their own level.

For the sound development of the country's agricultural potentialities, the different types of land use must be interwoven and properly co-ordinated. The Italian development of intensive farming as a separate and independent entity has led to dislocation, waste and considerable conflict of interests.

The Italian colonist is equipped for certain forms of farming, which cannot be undertaken by the sedentary or semi-nomadic Arab. This applies particularly to the breeding of stud animals, the feeding of stock for the export market, the production of milk for urban requirements, wine-making and the growing of seeding trees for afforestation.

On the other hand there are certain forms of agriculture for which the Arab is far better suited than the Italian, such as nomadic livestock raising in the semi-sedert, date production and henna, to mention only a few. There is no doubt that the independence of the two types of the production would soon become apparent to, and be appreciated by both, if a co-ordinated policy for the country

as a whole were adopted.

It must be stressed that without the assistance of modern techniques and capital, the Libyan cannot utilize the economic potentialities of his country more fully than he has already done. To carry out a program of economic development in Libya aiming at an increase in productivity of the country and a raising of the standard of living of its inhabitants, it is necessary to enlist financial and technical assistance from outside, for the Libyan government will neither at the present time nor in the future be able financially and technically to undertake such work. However, the United Nations Organization, which sponsored Libyan independence, is in a position to render this kind of assistance, free of any political strings.

What will be the economic future of this country when such a program of development has been completed with the help of the United Nations? At the present time it is difficult to predict, but there is every reason to believe that with a possible population of 1,500,000 inhabitants in the near future, about 50 percent of whom will be agriculturally employed, and producing much needed foodstuffs and other raw materials for home consumption and export, Libya may well look forward to a promising and more prosperous future.

PART III

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Libya, as a geographical term, needs some classification. The word itself is old and Herodotus, among other classical writers, mentioned it frequently. Revived, after a long period of neglect by the Italian geographer, F. Minutilli, in his *Bibliografia della Libia* (Turin, 1903) it was applied to the region which then comprised the Turkish Vilayets of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. Later it was officially adopted by the Italian Government, by the decree of 1911, after the region was declared under the complete sovereignty of Italy. This denomination, which then also entered international usage, indicates the two former Italian colonies of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, their Saharan hinterland, the various oases of the interior and other territories later acquired on the eastern and southern frontiers.

Geographically it has much wider significance, for the frontiers of Italian Libya were mere lines, for the most part, laid down arbitrarily on the map. The country does not change in character at those frontiers, nor for hundreds of miles beyond. To the geographer Libya implies rather the whole vast tract between the Mediterranean and the sudan scrub and grasslands, and between the mountains of the central Sahara and the Nile. This huge area, over a million square miles in extent, is essentially one unit and is

dominated by one main characteristic - aridity. Libya in this sense is the Libyan desert, one of the most extensive and truly arid regions on the face of the earth.

The factor that gave Libya this uniform characteristic also played the role of dividing the country into small regional units separated from each other by vast solitudes, and each possessing somewhat different physical and human characteristics. The most important of these units are Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan.

The infant state of Libya, which was born at the end of 1951 and which was mothered by the United Nations Organization, has had to carry from its birthday the burden of numerous and complicated social, economic and political problems.

A large proportion of the Libyan people, especially in Cyrenaica, are nomadic or semi-nomadic. Their way of life, their backward economic system and finally their tribal organization present a difficult problem to the new state - a problem which if it is to be solved, will call for a great deal of effort, time and careful consideration on the part of the state.

The Minority Problem

The most important and urgent socio-political problem, however, that faces the new state is the problem of minorities. Fortunately the new state of Libya has a homogeneous population, one that shares common ethnological origin, practises one religion and speaks a common language. Nevertheless, ethnographic and religious

minorities are by no means absent. Although these minorities may constitute a problem to the state in the future, such a problem is by no means unsolvable. There is little reason why co-operation between the majority and the minorities cannot be secured, if the new state follows in the treatment of its subjects, a policy of equality and justice.

Italians constitute the largest ethnographic and religious minority in Libya. In 1940 they numbered approximately 70,000. However, during World War II the Italians completely deserted Cyrenaica by order of the Italian government; the largest part of them went back to Italy, but a few of them settled in Tripolitania. For political reasons these Italians were not allowed to return to their settlements in Cyrenaica.

Today the Italian minority numbers 45,000, all of whom live in the province of Tripolitania; and a large number of them in the city of Tripoli; they are traders, professional and skilled laborers. The remainder live in rural settlements as farmers. Their standard of living is higher than that of the rest of the population. Under Italian rule they were the subjects of the ruling power, with all the advantages and privileges derived from that status. This situation was changed when Libya achieved her independence and the Italians became an unwanted alien element in the country.

The status of this Italian minority, the members of which it was hoped would be incorporated into the Libyan state, will become a major problem of the new state. When the United Nations

General Assembly adopted its scheme for Libya, most of the member states supporting it assumed that the Italian colonists would have a fair share in the project. However, right from the beginning the Arabs refused, for two reasons, to accept the Italians on any representative Tripolitanian bodies. First, there was the ill-feeling of the population toward them, inherited from the period of Italian rule, and second, there was the matter of their non-Libyan citizenship, since the Italians were still subjects of Italy. Count Sforza, the Italian Foreign Minister at the time, offered a solution to meet this objection: all the Italian colonists would indeed become Libyan citizens, cease, where possible, exclusive activities, try to draw Arabs into their commercial and agricultural undertakings, and generally merge their interests. In theory this solution should have met all Arab contentions. In practice it would not work. In the first place, the Italian colonists will want far more confidence in the future Libyan state before they take the serious step of breaking with Rome; in the second, they know that even as Libyan citizens they will be an ethnographic and religious minority in an Arabic Moslem country where their political and personal rights must be safeguarded by statute.

The Italians, who enjoy a high standard of living, and a more advanced economic and cultural status than do the native population, not to mention the support of a strong power lying only across the Mediterranean, are the only ethnographic group that may form an anti-national minority having great capacity for causing trouble to

the Libyan state. Making the matter more complicated is the sentimental hatred on the part of the native population for the Italians, which emanates from the sad memories of Italian rule in Libya. This condition will continue to hinder the friendly relations between the two peoples for a long time to come.

A sound solution for the problem of the Italian minority is not impossible if both sides look at the question realistically. Libya in her present status needs Italian capital, Italian experts and Italian experience in all walks of life, while on the other hand, the Italians need the friendship of the Arabs if they are to live with them in Libya. In other words, each side needs the other and the co-operation of both is indispensable for the progress of Libya in general. This necessary co-operation between the two sections of the population can be secured only if the Italian minority on its part adapts itself to the new conditions. They have to abandon all hopes of restoring Italian rule and they should become Libyan citizens, devoting all their efforts to the welfare and progress of their new homeland. The Libyan state for her part should realize the importance of the Italians in the life of the country. Thus it must offer them equal opportunities and treat them as loyal citizens. To help the establishment of friendly relations between the Arabs and the Italians in Libya, memories of past Italian rule should be forgotten and intimate relations should be established anew, on a fresh basis for the interest of all. The Count Sforza program is worth reconsidering as a preliminary basis to achieve this goal.

The Jewish minority had lived in Libya for a long time and their relation with the Arab majority was always cordial. As a result of this friendly relation, the Jews adopted the Arab way of life, speaking Arabic and using the native customs; in other words, they were Arabized. However, this friendly relation has gone through a drastic change since the Zionists secured the Balfour Declaration and announced their designs with regard to Palestine. The strife between the Arabs and Jews for possession of Palestine has characterized the Arabo-Jewish relation in the last 30 years. This struggle reached its climax in 1947, when the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Palestine Partition Plan. It spread over the Arab world wherever there was a Jewish minority living among an Arab majority. In Libya the growing hostility toward the Jewish minority showed itself most clearly in the incident of 1949.¹ The Jewish community realized, after the creation of the state of Israel, that it would be exceedingly difficult to maintain friendly relations with the Arabs and, therefore, their future in Libya as well as in other Arab country would not be secure. Partly for this reason and partly for religious and sentimental reasons they started migrating to Israel. By the summer of 1950 some 25,000 of them had left. Only a few thousand still live in the city of Tripoli,²

¹In late 1949 there were serious anti-Jewish riots in Libya, in which there was considerable loss of life.

²Middle East Journal, Vol. V, 1951, p. 305.

awaiting a chance to leave. Thus was the Jewish problem in Libya solved.

The Ibadites, a small religious minority, who are Moslem and Arab, are in no way considered a threat to the new state since they are few in number and also have a heritage common with the Arabs.

The Economic Problem

The new state's major weakness is financial. Meagerness of natural resources, foreign rule, and finally the destruction of World War II have brought the country to the verge of bankruptcy. The United Kingdom of Libya must face the harsh fact that it is a poor country, where the income per person of \$35 annually is the lowest in the Middle East.¹ In addition there is a paucity of minerals and fuel, and a chronic lack of skill and education. Thus the Libyans embraced their independence in a pitiful economic state. The new state's budget is not sufficient to meet minimum requirements of the civil service and of public utilities. Even with great austerity, the annual deficit runs to L1,600,000 (or approximately four and one half million dollars).² The British have been paying this deficit and subsidizing the country since occupation, and their subsidy will undoubtedly continue in one form or another. In the

¹The Economist, December 29, 1951.

²The New York Times, December 30, 1951.

second report to the General Assembly, the United Nations Commissioner states: "here are all the hallmarks of a country in the greatest need of help."

Possibilities for development exist in both agriculture and horticulture. Cereals, fruits and vegetables can be grown if large areas are irrigated, and livestock can be raised in greater quantities than at present. However, such a program of rehabilitation and development is beyond the financial and technical ability of the government of Libya at the present time and there is little prospect of it being achieved in the near future. With these problems in view the Commissioner invited those governments with close economic ties with Libya to lend their help. Since the Libyans are unable to undertake such a program the help must come from outside. The United Nations Organization which sponsored Libyan independence should, logically, be considered the chief source of this aid.

The world organization is interested in seeing that its first experiment in leading a country from a colonial position to an independent status is successful. This interest, therefore, makes it imperative for the United Nations to finish the job which it has undertaken, by granting Libya the necessary financial and technical assistance. This kind of international assistance would be appreciated by the Libyan people, since it would be free of any political or military demands. It would also eliminate any suspicion or trouble that might develop were the assistance to come from an individual power.

However, if the United Nations is unable to render such aid, then the second choice would be the United States. This country, which supported the independence of Libya wholeheartedly, is in a position to offer such financial and technical assistance, and its interest in the fate of this strategic area as part of its overall policy of preserving world peace justifies this aid. Financial aid of one million dollars was granted by the United States to the Libyan government on its inception, while another million dollars, through the Point Four Program, has been made available to Libya at the present time. However, more aid is needed and is expected in the near future from the United States. Great Britain is another source which could be counted upon for such assistance, for Britain has a special strategic interest in this country. She was the first to promise Cyrenaica her independence. The Libyan people who not only fought with the British and remained faithful to the Allies' cause during the lean years of the war but who also suffered a great deal of destruction, feel that they deserve British help. Britain so far has been subsidizing the Libyan budget, but more productive aid is expected from her.

Finally, the Arab League could be considered as a source of aid. However, in view of the financial and technical difficulties of state members, the League will not be able to render such assistance at the present time.

Despite her poverty, Libya is not entirely without certain kinds of natural resources. Through an economic development program,

more land could be put into cultivation. The country's chief industry, namely olives and livestock, could be greatly developed. However, economic development for Libya is a long-term business, needing steadiness and continuity. Tree-planting, education and training schemes will need generations before their results begin to show, and will involve considerable social adjustments, changes in land tenure, habits of regular work, and the formation of a proletariat. Development is not automatic, and considerable guidance will be needed to prevent its misuse.

If such a program could be largely achieved, there is every reason to believe that Libya could pay her own way. Her population could then look confidently to a more prosperous life than they have so far enjoyed.

Political Problems

The political problem of the new state is two-sided: one side is concerned with the internal politics of the country; the other is concerned with the international phase of the problem, that is, it is concerned with the state's foreign relations.

On the home front, the formidable difficulties of integrating three widely scattered provinces - Cyrenaica, Tripolitania and the Fezzan - into a state, "The United Kingdom of Libya," has been accomplished in theory, though incompletely in practice. The geographical differences between these three provinces and, consequently, their different historical, political and economic

development, are so deep that they cannot be wiped out in a short time. Provincial sentiment based on the aforementioned reasons was so strong that it necessitated careful consideration when the new state was formed. For instance, while the Cyrenaicans were solidly behind the Sanusi family, the Tripolitaniens were reluctant to accept the leadership of this family because of its reactionary attitude. Meanwhile, the Cyrenaicans were afraid that they would be outnumbered and their interests be ignored by their more advanced Tripolitanian brothers. However, to reconcile these geographical as well as historical, economic and political differences between the three provinces, and to secure the unity of the country, the present regime was adopted. This regime, which follows the federal pattern of state, gives each province a local autonomy to direct its own local affairs, while it insures the unity of the country through the federal government of all Libya. Broadly speaking, this pattern of state is ideal to deal with such a situation and is capable of coping with the differences. But in a poor country like Libya, with little more than a million people, to set up three separate provincial governments, complete with ministries and separate civil services in addition to the federal government, is undoubtedly beyond its ability. Apart from the heavy financial burden which this duplication involves there simply are not enough persons available to fill all the various posts, given the desperate shortage of trained personnel.

Future events will prove the impracticability of this system

and will also show that this pattern of state was to be only temporary. With the general progress of the country, the stability of the state and finally with the growth of Libyan nationalism, the Libyans will come to realize that this regime is overburdening them with expenditures from which there is no return. Only then can a pattern of centralized government be introduced with less expenditure and more efficiency.

Two factors will always influence the future relations of the new state of Libya with foreign powers; the one is physical, the other, human.

Libya's foreign relations will be greatly influenced by her geographical position. The fact that Libya stretches for 1400 miles along the southern shore of the Mediterranean necessitates that her foreign relations be discussed within the complicated political, economical and strategical pattern of this sea. Moreover, Libya, which is poorly endowed with natural resources, will always be a weak state. Thus in order to maintain her security, it is necessary for this state to follow a special foreign policy.

The human factor involves the national sentiment of the Libyan people. This sentiment, which stems from the cultural, economic, political and historical bonds of Libya with the rest of the Arab world, will also exert, with the growth of Arab nationalism, an increasing influence upon the state's foreign relations. Thus, to insure a successful foreign policy and avoid possible trouble, Libya should give careful consideration to these two factors in shaping her

future foreign relations.

The future of Anglo-Libyan relations should be considered in the light of the British policy in the Mediterranean. A short summary of this policy would help to understand the nature of these relations and the path which they may take in the future.

The Mediterranean is often described as the "vital route," the "life-line," and even the "jugular vein" of the British Empire. Indeed it is a vital interest in the full sense of the word to the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Long before the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, which transformed the Mediterranean from a cul-de-sac into a world thoroughfare, Britain had commercial and strategic interests there. However, the opening of the Canal greatly increased the importance of this continental sea, since it became once again, as in the Middle Ages, part of the most convenient highway from Europe to India and the Far East. British interests in the Mediterranean cover three main fields: (1) political, (2) economic, and (3) strategic.

The use of naval power in the Mediterranean was one effective means of intervention in European politics with the traditional British objective of maintaining the balance of power. For Britain, therefore, the use of the Mediterranean by her naval force was and still is an important means of exerting diplomatic pressure in time of peace both in southern Europe and in the Middle East.

An additional interest is in the economic field. British privately-owned capital is invested in Egypt, Greece and Palestine.

There are also British governmental holdings in the Suez Canal Company and there is British capital invested in Iraq Petroleum and Anglo-Iranian companies. As far as commerce is concerned, about 20 percent of British foreign trade passes through the Mediterranean. Meanwhile, the Mediterranean, which is only second to the North Atlantic route, is a valuable route for the merchant shipping which is an important source of foreign exchange.

The strategic importance of the Mediterranean to Britain resides in the fact that it provides the quickest route from Britain to the Indian Ocean, around the shores of which lie about half the area and three quarters of the population of the British Empire.

For Britain, Libya with her strategic advantage is a matter of vital concern, for with the evacuation of Palestine and eventually of Egypt, her whole Middle East defence system is in danger of collapse. Britain's recent conversion of Kenya into an alternative base does not substantially lessen, for two reasons, the importance of Libya. First, Kenya is not actually a suitable base for the defence of the Suez Canal; Cyrenaica has distinct advantages over Kenya because of her geographical position, the military installations built there during the war, and the sheltered port of Tobruk. Second, even though a power may not desire to extend its own influence in Libya, it may well wish to deny access to another power. With all this in mind, Britain gave her promise to the people of Cyrenaica that the Italian rule would never be allowed, at any cost, to return and she

then hurriedly recognized a Cyrenaican government, organized under Britain's staunch friend, Emir Idris el Sanusi. This recognition will give Britain a special position in the new state. On the other hand, Libya as a weak, poor and undeveloped country, will be in great need of British military protection as well as British financial and technical aid. Moreover, the Libyan people, who fought with the British to oust the Italians, have trusted the British and considered them as liberators. All these factors will lay the foundation of friendly relations, based on mutual interests, between Britain and Libya. These friendly relations will help the British to secure the necessary naval and air bases in Libya, that they need to maintain their declining prestige in this part of the world. However, in order to maintain these friendly relations and to secure the military bases, Britain has to settle her problems with the other Arab countries. If Britain wants to maintain friendly relations with the Arabs and secure her immense strategic, political and economic interests in the Arab world, she must adopt a more liberal policy toward them. Growing Arab nationalism is an important factor in shaping the Anglo-Arab relations in the future - a factor that the British policy-makers should not fail to recognize.

The other Mediterranean power with which Libya has to deal is France. Franco-Libyan relations will always be affected by the conflict between Arab nationalism and aspirations on the one hand and the French imperialist policy on the other.

Through her colonial activities during the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century, France has acquired the whole tract of land between the Libyan border and the Atlantic. The huge economic, political and strategical interests of France in North Africa have always influenced French policy toward the Arab countries. The growing nationalist movement for independence in French North Africa and the support it received from the Arab world have been responsible for the deterioration of the Franco-Arab relations. This explains the stiff opposition of France to granting Libya any form of independence. It also explains the reason for the French occupation of the territory of Fezzan. Thus the mutual suspicion and dislike between France and the Arabs will exert a great influence upon future Franco-Libyan relations. Franco-Libyan relations will not be cordial; on the contrary they will be strained and tense. Libya will, inevitably, be the base for the national movement in North Africa from which the struggle against France could be carried into Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, and this will definitely weaken Franco-Libyan relations.

Italy is a Mediterranean power which was in control of Libya for 30 years. Italy's geographical position in the Mediterranean, with 2500 miles of open coast, made her highly vulnerable to sea attack or blockade. This geographical fact has influenced Italian foreign policy ever since her unification in 1870. Thus the acquisition of Libya was primarily a strategic move to bolster Italy's defence. Libya's long shore dominates the approaches to

the Italian waters and as such Italy considered it as her first line of naval defence.

These geographical facts, in addition to the bitterness and hatred of the Libyan people toward Italy because of her inhumane treatment, will strain the Italo-Libyan relations in the future. The Libyans will always fear and suspect Italy, while the Italians, on the other hand, will not give up the idea of restoring some kind of control in Libya in the future. Mutual economic and cultural interests could serve as a sound basis for friendly relations. However, before such friendly relations can be established a period of preparation is needed. The Italians have given up for good their hope of regaining their control of Libya, while the Libyans on their part have to bury the hatchet and forget the unpleasant experience of past Italian rule. If this could be achieved, there is every reason to believe that friendly relations could be established between the two countries, with great economic and cultural advantages to both sides.

The complete change in the balance of power brought about by World War II compelled the United States to take a direct and active part in world affairs. Growing Soviet power made it more imperative than ever that the United States take the leading role in checking the deluge of Communism that might overwhelm the rest of the world. To defend the free world, the United States has to adopt a global strategy in which Libya, with her important strategic location, has a place. This explains the great interest shown by

the United States in the future of Libya.

The United States has already acquired Wheelers Air Base near Tripoli and hopes to secure more aero and naval bases once political stability is achieved in Libya. The United States' liberal policy, free from colonial ambition, will provide a sound basis for friendly relations between the two countries. Only the United States can offer Libya substantial financial and technical aid. She is also the only power that can guarantee the independence of Libya and prevent any encroachment upon her sovereignty by another power. Based upon the United States policy of opposing imperialism, the people of North Africa have always been looking to this country as the only one which sincerely supports them in their struggle for freedom and independence. Thus the outlook for American-Libyan relations is bright. It is in the interest of the Libyan people to gain the friendship and the support of a great country like the United States - a friendship worth persistent cherishing and promotion.

As for future relations between Libya and the rest of the Arab world, nothing less than a brotherly relation is conceivable. The common Arab national sentiment, the religion, the culture and finally the common history are a sound basis for this brotherly relation.

Libya is bound to be a member of the Arab League, irrespective of her political regime or the color of the political party in power. This desire was strongly expressed by an overwhelming majority of the Libyan people to the Four Power Commission which investigated

the Libyan case in 1948.

With the growth of Pan-Arabism, Libya will be drawn closer to the Arab world and her relations will be further strengthened. However, Libya's relations with her immediate neighbors, namely Egypt and Tunisia, due to geographical, economic and cultural factors, will be of particular importance and will be further strengthened.

Militarily, Libya, because of her limited natural resources, man-power and backward stage of technology, will never be able to foster a strong military power capable of defending her frontier.

Libya's geographical location in the central basin of the Mediterranean, her control of the land routes from western Asia and the Nile Valley to north and northwest Africa has further aggravated her military problem.

Events show clearly that throughout her history Libya was over-run by all the powers who have dominated the Mediterranean. This sea, on whose southern shore Libya is situated, is dominated at the present time by strong powers. It has been, and will always be, the ocean of power politics. In a world where power politics is the dominant factor in shaping international relations in general, and the Mediterranean Sea in particular, small nations have, if they want to survive, no alternative but to associate themselves with this or that big power. However, the future of small nations is not as gloomy as it looks. World public opinion is now stronger than ever; morality and ethics have some consideration in the international relations of the present day. And finally there is the

United Nations Organization which, although it is not very effective, can yet make itself felt in world affairs. Its intervention in Korea is an eloquent proof of its effectiveness in checking aggression on small nations.

The United Nations Organization, which sponsored the Libyan question and guided the state into independence, should not now fail to provide it with necessary protection. This world organization, which is the last hope for peace and progress should not allow its first experiment to become a pawn in power politics nor to be over-run by aggression. The protection of Libya poses the question as to whether the United Nations Organization will survive as an effective world organization or will become a chamber for empty talk. However, despite the protection which will definitely be offered by the United Nations Organization, Libya, as a precautionary measure, should associate herself with one or more of the strong powers in the Mediterranean. The United States should be the first choice, for she is in a position to offer such protection without expecting any colonial concessions. Britain would be the second choice, if the United States refuses to respond. The association of Libya with either France or Italy would not be desirable, because they both have colonial interests in Libya. That Libya will not be able to defend her boundaries alone should serve to attract the attention of the Libyan government, as well as the Libyan people, to the fact that any attempt to build up a military force beyond the needs of internal security would be in vain. The money and

effort which will be required for such a purpose are much more urgently needed to further the economic, social and cultural progress of the country.

Consequences of Libyan Independence

The repercussions resulting from Libyan independence will be most significant in Africa, the continent which has already been profoundly affected by this action.

In brief, Libya lacks practically all the usual qualifications for independence. Yet on both sides of her she has neighbors who, although much better prepared for self-government, are still under alien domination.

It is on these neighbors that Libyan independence will definitely have its most unsettling effect. The creation of the Libyan State is bound to stimulate the demand for a greater measure of self-government in neighboring Tunisia and Morocco, and ultimately in Algeria. It has already proved a potent argument for hastening self-government in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. The impact of Libya's new status will, undoubtedly, be felt most forcibly by France in her efforts to restrain the rising Arab nationalism in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. Secondly, it probably will affect British-Egyptian relations, already in a state of deterioration. It may ultimately touch the United States, which, with the consent and co-operation of France, is building air bases in French Morocco.

In North Africa, France since World War II has been confronted with the same sort of native discontent and nationalism that has engulfed the Middle and Far East. By virtue of treaties extracted under military pressure in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, France exercises protectorates over the North African countries of Tunisia and French Morocco, both nominally independent Arab Moslem monarchies, but in actual fact dominated by France. Algeria, the third French North African territory, is officially a part of metropolitan France, although its native population does not enjoy the full political rights of metropolitan Frenchmen. In all three territories there are native nationalist parties, whose aims range from complete independence to internal self-government within the framework of the French Union.

The case of North African Arabs is simple; they contend that the protectorates are outmoded and not in keeping with the principle of the United Nations, and that they are now entitled, after a long period of French tutelage, to take charge of their own affairs. All of the nationalists are dissatisfied with the pace and extent of French political reforms and their dissatisfaction will undoubtedly be increased by the fact that their poor, untutored relations in Libya have now gained the goal of full independence almost without a struggle. In Tunisia the latest demands of the nationalist movement for internal independence have been rejected by the French government. This stiff attitude of France toward the nationalist demands compelled the Tunisian government to complain

to the United Nations, asking for its intervention. The present strife in Morocco is another phase of the general struggle of the people of French North Africa for freedom and independence.

Not only is Libyan independence a source of irritation to the French in North Africa, but British influence in Libya is an added irritation. Remembering the help that Britain gave in terminating the French mandate in Syria and Lebanon, the French have often suspected that Libya is being or will be used by Britain as a political base for undermining France's position in North Africa. For other reasons the French are dubious of the intention of the United States. Officially the United States takes no interest in North African internal affairs, aside from wanting its air bases there to be secure. Unofficially, the French suspect and the Arabs hope that the United States is ready to sympathize with all movements for national independence. So the French are on guard against American encouragement to North African nationalism.

Libya is the land to which the United Nations has just handed mankind's greatest political attainment - self-government. Were this experiment being undertaken in any period but that of the cold war of 1952, it would be a most hopeful and inspiring advance over colonialism. But, actually, by the hoisting of the flag of Libyan independence, grave political and strategic questions for the western world are raised in a sensitive and important area.

The experiment must, of course, go forward. Just as much of the fighting in World War II centered on the control of Libya's

1400 mile Mediterranean coast-line, without which no power in history has been able to win and maintain control of southern Europe, so also was the war fought for the ideals of liberty and political advance. It is to maintain that hard-won security that Britain today keeps over-strength military units based in Libya, and the United States maintains Wheelers Air Field; it is to maintain the political idealism for which the last war was fought that Libya is being given the right to run her own affairs.

The interest of all peace-loving people of the world, as well as the integrity and prestige of the United Nations is at stake in this experiment, hence the dire need for a successful conclusion. All means and possibilities must be explored by the world organization to see that this experiment is extended and applied to colonies and dependencies in similar conditions.

If the major colonial powers are willing to sacrifice their selfish interests for the sake of international peace and prosperity, there is every reason to believe that the United Nations can accomplish this task successfully, in the same manner as it did in Libya. Should this dream be realized, a major source of disagreement and unrest would be removed from the international scene.

Finally, is Libya really a political problem? To answer this question means repeating all that has been previously said. However, a brief statement would serve to present to the reader the essence of the last conclusion which this study has reached.

That Libya is a poor country with limited natural resources,

man-power and technology, does not make her by herself an international problem. For if such were the case then the majority of the countries on this earth would fall into this category, since poverty and backwardness in differing degrees are the conditions under which the overwhelming majority of the world's population is living today. However, poverty and backwardness should not be used as a justification to deprive small nations of their natural right for freedom and self-government.

Libya has become an international political problem through the rivalry and competition among the big powers for control of her strategic points. Libya can live and pay her way, like many other underdeveloped countries, and not become a problem, provided she can stay outside the orbit of international rivalry. Such a condition cannot be realized as long as the big powers look after their own interests, disregarding what happens to the world as a whole. It must be admitted that the Libyans themselves have shown more appreciation of the responsibilities awaiting them than many people expected, and there is no reason to be pessimistic about their chances of organizing an effective government.

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APPENDIX NO. I

Italy's Share of Tripolitania's Foreign Trade

Year	Value in Italian Lire	Percent from Italy	Value in Italian Lire	Percent to Italy
1931	185,083,000	65	29,711,000	56
1932	160,568,000	71	29,278,000	38
1933	153,043,000	71	28,608,000	49
1934	161,587,000	72	30,089,000	57
1935	167,148,000	71	36,130,000	75
1936	263,253,000	84.4	31,117,000	93
1937	354,862,000	81	57,308,000	92
1938	417,230,000	84	48,609,000	93
1939	898,084,000	90	46,809,000	97
1940	888,066,000	90	45,685,000	98

Italy's Share of Cyrenaica's Foreign Trade

1931	92,307,000	67	10,515,000	54
1932	83,465,000	68	4,025,000	40
1933	85,694,000	68	12,080,000	86
1934	85,401,000	68	10,132,000	60
1935	171,902,000	81	15,224,000	64
1936	325,925,000	90	69,921,000	90
1937	232,378,795	88	not available	
1938	333,841,450	92	not available	

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I, Abdul Amir Majeed, was born in Basra, Iraq, August 21, 1916. I received my secondary school education in the public schools of the city of Basra, Iraq. My undergraduate training was obtained at the High Teacher College in Bagdad, Iraq, from which I received the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1941. After two years of teaching in high schools in Bagdad, I entered Faruk the First University at Alexandria, Egypt, and received a second Bachelor of Arts degree in 1945. In 1946 I taught at a teacher's college in Bagdad.

From Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, I received the Master of Arts degree in 1950. In 1951 I started graduate work in the Department of Geography, Ohio State University, and expect to receive the degree Ph.D. in June, 1952.